

February 24, 2019 “Living with a New Status”

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Let us read the book of Galatians 3:23-29.

For those who speak English, during this sermon, I will quote a couple of the Bible's verses and read it in Japanese, but I will not read the same verses in English to save time, especially long verses, but you will see the English verses on the screen along with Japanese, so please read it while I am reading. Thank you! So, this is Galatians 3:23-29;

²³ Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. 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 according to the promise.

I have three different kinds of identification. Passport, Driver's License and Social Security Card. These identifications tell you about who I am.

When we become a Christian, we are given a new status. The status is not visible but it is surely given by God. I would like to share about three statuses today.

First of all, what God gives to us is adoption as “a child of God”.

To be a child of God

Today's verses 26 says; “**you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**”, and in verses 24 and 25, we find the word “**Guardian**”. A guardian is someone who is not a parent, but fosters a child.

And according to this verse, the people of Israel were fostered by the Guardian, and according to verses 23 and 24, the Guardian is **the LAW** which God gave to them.

For those who try to read the whole Bible, they will face the book of Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy in the Old Testament. And these books are filled with a lot of laws and these laws confront us just like a big mountain. The mountain makes us overwhelmed! The laws repeatedly command "You should not do this or you have to do that" Honestly speaking many of us must question why God gave us such numerous of laws.

Actually, we need these laws to be a child of God, because without the rules, we do not know what is good and what is bad. We can only know whether we are following the law or violating the law by looking at the speed limit on the traffic sign.

This is exactly what Apostle Paul indicated in Romans 7:7. ⁷What shall we say, then? Is the law sinful? Certainly not! Nevertheless, I would not have known what sin was had it not been for the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "You shall not covet." (Romans 7:7)

Therefore, the law is like a mirror we see reflections of ourselves in. And when we see ourselves in the mirror, we find that we cannot follow the law. A mirror can only reflect us, please keep in your mind, we cannot wash the dirt off of our face with the mirror.

Paul also clearly mentioned about this, **"through the law we become conscious of our sin"** (Romans 3:20).

Therefore, we really need the God given law. Without the law, we never know about our sins. The law makes us aware of our sins and the sins will be forgiven by the cross of Jesus Christ. Truly, the law, our guardian helps us encounter Jesus, and leads us to God.

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There is an interesting expression in Galatians 4:6 which is that we can call God "Abba, Father". "Abba" is a word used by little Jewish children to call their father. It is almost like "daddy".

We needed our guardian, but we do not keep living with the guardian. We should not remain in the status of "I have committed sins" forever.

Like verse 26 said; **we are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus**, our sins were forgiven by the cross of Jesus Christ. Therefore, we can live freely from the law and live as God's son.

As our second status, we become one with other Christians in the name of Christ.

We become one in the name of Christ.

When we become a Christian, we belong to new family in Christ. That family includes all Christians, because we have the same father. There is not a difference of nationality. There is no difference of each person's status and gender, but we are the one under our same father.

Verses 26 -28 explained about it **"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus"**. (Galatians 3:26-28).

Of course, we do not live together in the same house by becoming Christian. We do not leave our family nor dedicate all our fortune like a cult. Even though we are not able to see visibly, the Bible says we are one in Christ.

In 1 Corinthians 12, Paul says we are one in Jesus Christ and explains this with a metaphor of the human body. He says we are each a part of the body of Christ.

Some people may think, I have no connection with that person. But we are one body in Christ. Look at the person next to you. They have probably

lived a different life style and their age is different, but you and they are both a child of the same father, God and we all to the body of Christ.

The third status is that we are the successor of God.

To be an heir of God.

Is anyone here a successor to someone? There are different types of inheritance, and sometimes a successor is burdened by inheritance tax.

The promise of inheritance that the Bible promises to us is astonishing. I thought the word inheritance has nothing to do with me, but the Bible said, I am God's heir !

There is a Seven Eleven near my house. I stop by sometime and see the amount of money that can be won in the lottery. Sometimes the prize is like 100 million dollars. I do not buy any lottery tickets, but sometimes I glance to think if I get this amount of money, we can have an amazing church building.

We will become heirs to God. We cannot compare this with the prize of 100 million dollars. We cannot compare God's inheritance and Bill Gate's inheritance.

Our heavenly father who possesses not only the Grand Canyon and Mt Everest but also Orion and Mars, and we can call Him "daddy" and be heirs to Him.

If somebody asked you today, "If you pay 1 dollar for this winning lottery ticket, you will receive 30 million dollars in your account" and if the story was indeed true, nobody would hesitate to pay 1 dollar for 30 million dollars. Nobody would say, "Oh no, I do not want to pay 1 dollar" or "Well let me think tonight, and then I will respond tomorrow". We surely would pay 1 dollar quickly.

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I saw a big billboard while I was driving home from church. There was a huge picture of a smiling face on it. What was the sign for? The person on the board got 50 thousand dollars at a Casino. People probably see the picture and say to themselves "I will be the next one".

Galatians 3:29 said "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

We have missed a tremendous promise from God. How many people do not even consider this amazing promise and spend time and money for lottery and Casino?

The promises for us is so wonderful. God will stamp on our identification, that we are a child of God, that we are in the family of God, and that we are heirs to God. And these are promised to everyone in Christ. Do you have these three statuses?

Let's pray

Our heavenly father, there are things in this world that we cannot buy or obtain by our own effort. We have seen these three things today. To be a child of God, to be a family of God, and to be God's heir, thank you that you give us these precious statuses.

You said "I will give you these anytime" so may we receive that by our faith with thanksgiving, and may all of us live our life with these three identifications. We pray these things in precious Jesus name, amen.

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