

# Galatians 4:4-7

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Preacher: Paul Levy

[ 0 : 00 ] I love this Sunday. Sometimes preachers call this the graveyard Sunday.! Mulled wine and mince pies and the sermon's got to be 15 minutes.

Otherwise you lot freak out. Alright. So we're going to look today at the epistle of Galatians. We're going to look at Galatians chapter 4. And look at really how the Apostle Paul fleshes out the incarnation.

Then tonight we're going to look at, I believe, in the virgin birth. So Galatians 4. Can you look at it? Galatians 4 verses 4 to 7. Galatians 4 verses 4 to 7.

Let me read you. This is the word of God. When the fullness of time has come, God sent forth his son born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who are under the law, so that we might receive adoption of sons.

And because you are sons, God has sent the spirit of his son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father. So you are no longer a slave, but a son. And if a son, then an heir through God. Let's pray.

[ 1 : 30 ] Our Father in heaven, we thank you that your Holy Spirit inspired the Apostle Paul to write these words. And your same Holy Spirit is with us this morning. And so we pray that he might enlighten our hearts and our minds.

That he would stir up our affections with love for the Lord Jesus Christ. We pray for the help and the enabling of your Holy Spirit.

Without him, we can do nothing. And so we ask you, the God who is there, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit, that you would speak to us now. For we pray this in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen. And four things this morning. Four crucial issues. First of all, the time of his birth. First of all, can you say it?

When the time had fully come, God sent his son. Secondly, the identity of the baby. Third, the reason he was born. And fourth, the outcome for believers. Number one, at the time of his birth.

[ 2 : 26 ] When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his son. Literally, that word is when the time had reached its fullness.

It's the word that you use for filling up a bottle with water. And so you fill up the bottle and the bottle gets fuller and fuller and fuller until eventually it's at its capacity.

And nothing more can go into the bottle. And when you get into a lift, that word is there, isn't it? It says a maximum number of people. What is it? Six. So you get into those tiny lifts and it says 20.

You can't believe that you could fit 20 people into a lift. That's the picture. The fullness. The capacity. Nothing more can get into it. Nothing more can be added to it.

The content is perfect. Full. And what Paul is saying is that God has put everything into history up to this point to prepare for the birth of Jesus Christ.

[ 3 : 32 ] The times have reached their fullness. God has done everything. There's nothing more to be done. God has left nothing out. He's left nothing undone in his preparation for the coming of Jesus.

If you look at the times immediately preceding the coming of Jesus, you'll see that it was the fullness of time. Both the Roman and the Greek civilizations in which people lived contributed. Both geographically and politically, they made the world one. All roads lead to Rome, the saying goes. There was the possibility with the roads that they'd built and the situation that they'd produced around the world for a highway to be made for the gospel.

The Greek language was the common means of communication. And so that the gospel could be broadcasted all around the globe. Greek culture and religion, as well as Roman religion, was in a state of terminal death, terminal emptiness and vacuousness.

People were crying out with a sense of despair about the needs of their deepest being. And into this, the gospel of the Lord Jesus, the good news of a saviour born in Bethlehem, came into the fullness of time.

[ 4 : 56 ] Politically, linguistically, geographically, religiously, it was the right time. But actually, that isn't really what Paul is talking about there.

It doesn't touch the deepest, most vital thing that Paul is speaking about. Because what the apostle is telling us is that God is the sovereign Lord of time and history.

All the events which we have read of in Bethlehem and the surrounding countryside, all those events took place. And that moment that struck was God's perfect timing.

It meant that God had left nothing undone in time and history. And it was his moment that the Lord Jesus Christ came. God had been preparing for this moment from before the foundation of the world.

For the coming of his son. Throughout human history, he'd been mainly working through his ancient people, Israel. Preparing them, disciplining them. Patiently dealing with them and bearing with them.

[ 6 : 01 ] But in the fullness of days, out of Zion, there would come the good news that a virgin would conceive and bear a son. And it's this that Paul is referring to when he says, In the fullness of time, God sent forth his son.

He's saying that God had left nothing undone to prepare for this day. For God's time is always perfect. God is never late.

Isn't that a wonderful thing? God is never late. His people need to reflect that. God is never hurried.

God is never haphazard. He is the perfect Lord of time and of history. And the time of the birth of the Lord Jesus Christ is a reflection of the perfect planning of God in history and for his people.

The second thing is the identity of the baby. Who is he on yonder stall at whose feet the shepherds fall? Who is he? Who is this so meek and lowly?

[ 7 : 17 ] That's the question. And we need to centre on who is the baby. That's the thing that God focuses on. The identity of the baby.

Because the identity of the baby matters more than anything else. And if you notice in our verses, in Galatians 4.4, God gives us a two-fold answer to that question.

Who is the baby? He is first of all God's son. When the time had fully come, God sent his son. But he's secondly, Mary's child. When the time had fully come, God sent his son, born of a woman.

And the reason Paul gives us that double description, God's son, Mary's child, is that those two descriptions tell you the most important things that you need to know about this child.

This Christ child. He is both perfectly God and fully man. And that is what makes him perfectly qualified to fulfil his mission.

[ 8 : 26 ] And it is a mission, isn't it? Can you see that? God sent his son. Sent forth his son. It's the same word that is used in the New Testament for apostle. Apostle means sent one.

Christ came as God's apostle. And so he's called in Hebrews the apostle and the high priest of our profession. He came sent by God into this world.

And an apostle is one who fulfils a mission. Now what enabled the Lord Jesus Christ to fulfil the mission which his father sent him for? It was that he was perfectly God and fully man.

And perfectly man. Notice how that displays itself. It was only God who could accomplish our salvation. If you're in the water, you need someone from outside the water to come in and rescue you.

Only God could accomplish our salvation. And that's true, isn't it? From its planning in all eternity before the foundation of the world. To its execution on the cross of Calvary.

[ 9 : 39 ] To its consummation at the end of time when Jesus will come again. From beginning to end, salvation is of the Lord. Rescue is of God.

Only God can accomplish the salvation that you and I need. Within the context of this verse in the epistle of Galatians. Paul is speaking about this dreadful disaster that's infected the church in Galatia.

They're going back to that place where they're trying to produce a salvation of their own. It was a salvation of their own by doing their best. By trying to keep the law.

And Paul is emphasizing for them that only God can accomplish salvation. And if you think, well, that's just something that was happening in New Testament times.

That is the common default of our hearts. For every single one of us. The common conviction in so many churches today. Is that the way that you're acceptable to God is by doing your best.

[ 10 : 46 ] And if you do your best, well, God will never keep you out of glory or heaven. And that's actually never far from our hearts this morning. Even if we've been a Christian for many, many years, like many of us have.

We know that that so easily is what we drift into. And it is deadly. And so the question, are you a Christian? The answer comes back, well, I hope so. Will you go to heaven when you die? Well, I'm trying. What is a Christian? Well, someone who's kind. Someone who does his best. And Paul is saying, no, no, no. The good news of Christmas.

The good news of the incarnation. The good news is that God sent forth his son. It is that only God can save. Only God can deal with the needs of men and women.

And when he says that God sent forth his son. It is that God the creator has now come to be God the redeemer. He who in the manger lies is he who built the starry skies.

[ 11 : 53 ] Have you grasped that? The baby in the manger is not cute and one that you can manipulate. He is the Lord of glory. He's the Lord of glory who's come down to be the redeemer of his people.

But in order to save us, in order to rescue us, God had to enter into our predicament. And in our place. And become one of us.

And he had to represent us. In the place of our judgment. And in order to do that, he had to become a man. A human being.

He had to become like us. And that's why he's not only son of God, but child of Mary. He came to be fully God and fully man.

But do you notice he's not just a man. He's a perfect man. Notice what the verse says. When the time had fully come.

[ 12 : 54 ] When the fullness of time had come. God sent forth his son, born of a woman. Born under the law. That means many things.

It's got many applications. But one of the things it means for us. Is that the Lord Jesus Christ submitted himself to the law of God. We heard it in our reading of the Lord, didn't we?

The Lord Jesus loved the Lord God with all his heart and mind and soul and strength. He loved his neighbour as himself. And the Lord God utterly fulfilled it. He obeyed God's law to its last detail.

The law which you and I have broken and transgressed. And has become the instrument of our judgement. And our despair.

The Lord Jesus Christ kept that law. He kept it in the beauty of his character. In the perfection of his obedience. And he lived not only as a man. But as the perfect man.

[ 13 : 58 ] And when the time came. For our sin to be atoned for. He could atone. He could pay the penalty for you and I.

Because he had no sin of his own. He could atone for others. Because he had no sin of his own to pay for. Therefore this babe in the manger. Is God made perfect man.

For our salvation. His divinity. And his humanity. And his righteousness. Perfectly qualifies him to be our saviour.

The third thing that Paul concentrates on. Is not only the time of his death. And the identity of the baby. But the reason why he was born. It's crystal clear in the text isn't it. When the time had fully come.

God sent his son. Born of a woman. Born under the law. To redeem. Those under the law. That we might receive adoption.

[ 15 : 03 ] As sons. So what was God's purpose. In sending his son into the world. Two things there aren't there. First.

To redeem. And then to adopt. As we think about Christ the baby in the manger. And we ask the question.

Why have you come? What are you doing? What is the purpose of those cries from the baby? What is the reason behind the angels. Breaking into the night.

On that hillside to the shepherds. And singing glory to God in the highest. It is two things. It is redemption and adoption. He came to redeem those.

Under the law. What does that mean? Well it means that for men and women. And boys and girls. Who think that they can somehow. Climb up the ladder.

[16:01] Of the law. And somehow reach God. By their own attainments. Those who think that they can keep the commandments. As best as they can. And God will overlook it.

It means that you've not understood Christianity at all. Listen to this quote from John Carson. If God had perceived that our greatest need was economic.

He would have sent an economist. If he'd perceived that our greatest need was entertainment. He would have sent us a comedian or an artist. If God had perceived that our greatest need was political stability.

He would have sent us a politician. If he'd perceived that our greatest need was health. He would have sent us a doctor. But he perceived that our greatest need involved our sin. Our alienation from him.

Our profound rebellion. Our death. And he sent us. A saviour. He sent us a saviour. A saviour who will deal with my transgression.

[17:02] My outright rebellion. The leaning of my heart. That is constantly away from God. My falling short. My tendency to failure.

And so those who are under the judgment of the law of God. Paul says in the fullness of time. God sent his son born of a woman. To redeem those who are under the law.

And cannot get out from under it. What does it mean to be under the law? It is to be under the curse and the judgment of God. The Bible says cursed is everyone.

Who does not continue in these commandments. Cursed is everyone. Who does not continue in those. In these commandments.

That's me. That's you. And so how does Christ redeem us. From the curse of the law. Well you don't need to look very far.

[18:00] To find the answer. If you look at Colossians. Sorry. Galatians chapter 3 and verse 13. Can you see that? Just look over the page. Colossians chapter 3 verse 13. What does Paul tell you?

He tells you that Christ. The Lord Jesus. Redeemed us. From the curse of the law. By becoming a curse. For us. For it is written.

Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree on the cross. He became a perfect God. And perfect man. Recognizing that there was no other way. In which that curse of God could be dealt with. He became perfect man and perfect God.

Recognizing there was no other way. In which that curse of God could be poured out. Except it was poured out on him. In order that you and I might be freed from the law's curse.

[19:06] The Lord Jesus related to the law of God in several ways. The Lord Jesus fulfilled it in his own life. He obeyed it in perfect obedience.

And he bore its judgment. The very curse of God upon sin on Calvary. He became a baby.

He was helpless. But the Bible tells us that he also became poor. He was rich beyond all telling. But he became poor.

He had to borrow a coin for an illustration. He had no place to lay his head. And yet he had made the universe. And he not only became man and poor.

He became for us a curse. Says Paul. And that means that the very curse of God. Upon a broken law.

[20:09] Was laid upon Christ at Calvary. And that is what he came to do. Not only to redeem us from the curse of the law. But. To adopt us into God's family.

Verse 5. Of Galatians 4. When the fullness of time had come. God sent forth his son. Born of a woman. Born under the law. To redeem those who were under the law. So that we might receive adoption.

As sons. And so he was going to take us. Isn't it? From the place where we are banished. From God. And under God's curse.

And he's going to bring us. Into the glorious privilege. Of being his children. Of being his sons. And his daughters. Who have access to him.

And call him. Father. And so Christ was born. To bear our judgment. And to bring us.

[21:09] Into all the privileges. As sons and daughters of God. Many of us. Not all of us.

But many of us have enjoyed. And we kind of big family gatherings. These last few days. I don't know what your family is like. But for our family. That's a really joyful thing. Where kind of hordes of people gather.

And we didn't have it this year. But often there are people. Who are kind of stragglers. Who come along. And they're told. And they're told. Welcome to the family. Welcome to the family. It'll happen today. Won't it? At your dinner table. With people who you. You weren't expecting to come for lunch. But you invite them to lunch. Because they're visitors to London. And they come in. And what do you say? You say. Well. Welcome to the family. It's a little tiny. Tiny. Tiny picture. Of what the Lord Jesus has come to do. When the time had come. God sent forth his son. And he's gathering a people.

[ 22 : 07 ] From every tribe. And tongue. And nation. And he says. Welcome to the family. Come. Come to the family table. The last thing.

In this verse. Is. The outcome for us. Who put our trust in the Lord Jesus. And the last thing he touches on. Is in verse 6. Isn't it? He says this.

Because you are sons. God has sent the spirit of his son. Into our hearts. Crying. Abba. Father. Again.

There's multitudes of things. We could talk about. But let me point this out to you. The glorious outcome. Of Jesus Christ. Coming to Bethlehem. For people like us. Who embrace. And receive him. Is that Christ. Is. Going to be born. By the Holy Spirit. Not just. In Bethlehem. But in us.

[ 23 : 10 ] That Christ. Is going to be born. Not just. In Bethlehem. But born in us. And the place. Where the Lord Jesus. Dwells. Now. Is not only.

At the right hand. Of the Father. In glory. But in the life. Of the humblest believer. Can you see. There's two. Sendings. Out there. There is God. Sending his son. And God. Sent his spirit. His Holy Spirit. And why did he. Send his spirit.

In order that. Christ. Who came. To be with us. And to die for us. Might dwell in us. That's an incredible truth.

Isn't it? God sent his spirit. In order that. Christ. Who came to be with us. And to die for us. Might dwell in us.

[ 24 : 05 ] By his spirit. God sent. And that's why. He sent the Holy Spirit. And this. Glorious. Reality. This distinctive.

Reality. For those who put our trust. In the Lord Jesus. Is that. Jesus Christ. The Lord of the ages. The saviour of sinners. Who is perfect God.

And perfect man. Lives in me. Lives in me. The wonder.

And the glory. The thrill. And the hope. Of God. Who has sent forth. His son. Born of a one.

Born under the law. To redeem those. Who are under the law. That we might receive. Adoption. As sons. And because you are sons.

[ 25 : 04 ] God has sent. The spirit of his son. Into our hearts. Crying. Abba father. Let's pray.

Thank you.