God Sends Us the Gifts that Keep on Giving

Galatians 4:4-7

A little over a week ago, there was great excitement in the air. Children woke up earlier than normal to see what was under the Christmas tree. Wrapping paper was torn off and thrown away and everyone's face light up with the excitement of receiving gifts. People work hard to see that reaction. Hours go into picking the perfect gift that will last a long time. When we see that look on someone's face it makes it all worth it. How long does it take for that feeling to wear off? Christmas was four days ago, and some of those gifts that gave so much joy are already forgotten. It might not have even taken a week. If only we could give a gift that keeps the feeling alive forever. Paul reminds us that we already have a few Gifts like that in his letter to the Galatians. Even though we forget about them, God sends us Gifts that keep on giving. He sent his Son. He sent the Spirit of his Son.

The Galatians were a young church that was started by Paul. He always liked to check in on how the churches were doing. When he received a report about the Galatians, there were a few problems that he needed to help them work out. One of the major problems was that it seemed like the Galatians were easily swayed from the true gospel. The gospel that only through the work of Jesus they were saved. There were many other "gospels" around that seem to take root in the Galatian church. The one they seem to have the most trouble with was the thought that they could add something to make themselves more worthy of heaven. It's kind of an add-on mentality in the minds of Galatians. Sure the gospel is good by itself, but if we were to add on a bunch of other works it's probably going to be better. This was part of the Judaizers movement. They taught that the gospel was good, but if you really want to be worthy of heaven you also had to keep all the rules and regulations, the law, of the Old Testament. To say anything is needed for salvation besides faith in Christ denies the entire work of Jesus on our behalf.

Paul goes right to the heart of the matter. He starts to talk about the Old Testament law and how there was a promise that predated the law. Paul tells us that God gave Abraham the promise 430 years before God gave the law to the Israelites. He explains that even in the Old Testament, the law was not meant to be a way of salvation. The Law in the Old Testament only highlighted how short they fell. They were not able to do anything that pleases God. If we were to look at the laws of ceremonial cleanliness in the Old Testament we would realize that it was almost impossible for them to keep themselves ceremonially clean for any length of time. All the law was meant to do was to point them back to the promise that God had given. The promise of the Savior who would take away sin. Paul is telling us that we cannot save ourselves through the law. If we were to examine ourselves with the law we would see we are in capable of keeping the law. Sure, we might be able to keep ourselves from doing the outward actions of the law forbids, but our thoughts and desires still cause us to sin. The law just points out that we need a Savior from sin. It points us to the promise that through faith in our sins are forgiven in Jesus.

Paul tells us, "When the time had fully come God sent his Son born of a woman born under the law to redeem those under the law." Now this sentence might not sound very profound, but if we take a closer look at the words we can see some amazing things about the Gifts that God sends us. First, let's look at the word sent. It might seem like an ordinary word, but if we take a closer look at the original language this word has a very deep meaning. It shares the same root as the word apostle. This sending out is more than just somebody telling somebody to go. It has the idea of completely equipping and outfitting a person to do a job. When Paul says God sent his Son, he means God laid out everything exactly so that Christ would be able to
redeem us. Paul lays out two things here that show us how God had thoroughly equipped Jesus to do the work of redeeming those who are under the law.

The first thing he tells us is that Jesus is God's son. This means that Jesus is 100% true God. Let's think why would be necessary for Jesus to be true God in order to redeem us. One of the first things that comes to mind is that God is holy. Only he is able to fulfill his standard of perfection in order to earn salvation. We are sinful human beings unable to do anything right before God, so his perfect law condemns us. The only thing we can earn is eternal death. Jesus on the other hand, being true God is able to keep the law perfectly because he is holy and has earned salvation. There is another reason that Jesus had to be true God. Let's just say an ordinary person happens to live a perfect life. What would happen when that person died and stood before God? He would be able to enter into heaven, but he would not be able to pay anybody else's way into heaven. Since Jesus is true God, his death could easily pay for the sins of the entire world. This is why was necessary for Jesus to be true God.

Second, we are told that Jesus was born of a woman. This means that he is 100% true man. Why did Jesus have to be true man to be thoroughly equipped to redeem us? He had to be a human to experience everything we do. By experiencing everything that we do Jesus is able to understand all our trials and temptations. More than just experiencing the same things we do, Jesus had to be true man so that we could be redeemed by his blood. God cannot die. The only way to pay for sin is through death. So Jesus had to be 100% true man so that he could suffer and die on the cross for us. His blood was the only payment for the sins of the whole world.

So Jesus to be completely equipped for the work of redeeming us he had to be 100% true God so that his death could count for the entire world. He also had to be 100% true man so that he could die to pay for our sins. He was born under law. Jesus had to humble himself and put himself under the law. When he was under the law, he was judged and tempted in just the same way we were. He never gave into any of those temptations. Even though he had committed no sin, he took the sins of the whole world on to himself and died on the cross. When he was examined by the law, he found to be sinless. He fulfilled the law. He had paid the price for all of the sins of the world with his perfect life and innocent suffering and death, and now the law unable to condemn any of us.

Our heavenly father still sends us his Gifts that keep on giving. He sent his Son to redeem us from the law, for all the times we have tried to justify ourselves and looked for our own way into heaven. Even though we like to wander away from our Lord he continues to send us Gifts that keep on giving. He sends us the Spirit of his Son.

Paul continues by saying, "Because you are sons, God sent the Spirit of his son into our hearts, the spirit who calls out, Abba, Father." This is one of the Gifts that God sent us that continues to give and change our lives. It all starts through the Word of God and baptism. In baptism, infants receive the Holy Spirit into the hearts. This is because the water is attached to the Word of God with his promises. This shows that faith is a gift of God. We do nothing to earn it. Infants are not able to rationally believe in God, but through the word of God he sends the Holy Spirit into the heart. It is the same for adults. Many times we like to think that we are smart enough to figure out that we need a Savior, and who that Savior is. It is only through the Word of God that he sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts creating faith. This faith changes our outlook on life.

This is because we have received the full rights of sons. Even though we are sons of God through adoption, we do not act like his perfect son. We still have that old Adam of us that tries to fight and resist God. Through faith we come to know God as our loving father that only wants
to help and protect us. Our old Adam still sees him as a parent who only wants to control us. God has told us what to do and what not to do and his word. We like to think we know better. Instead of acting like full-grown sons, we act like little children. We know what we should and shouldn't do, but we try to find all the little loopholes to get around it without looking bad in the eyes of the world. We try to justify ourselves by saying we've kept the law. We haven't done any of the outward actions that the 10 Commandments talk about. We can say, "I haven't stolen anything, committed adultery, or lied". Even though we know that the law condemns more than just the outward actions. We know that the law tells us that we should not have any thoughts or desires that run contrary to what God has told us in his law. Even though we tried to find our own way, God has made us his children.

Through faith we received all the rights of sons with all the blessings it includes. Now you might wonder why the word son is used instated of child. Why would he say we are all sons? It is because in his time, only sons would inherit from the father. The daughters would marry and become part of a different family and receive thing though their husbands. Paul is saying this to the entire congregation every man, woman, and child to assure them that every believer is a true heir. Through faith we are all sons who will receive our inheritance from God. Here on earth God blesses us in so many ways that we cannot even keep track because we are his sons and heirs. God keeps many dangers away from us. We are unable to count all the evil and danger that God stopped from reaching. He also provides for all our earthly needs. These are easy compared to the blessing of eternal life and salvation that he has provided us through the work of his Son. For me the greatest blessing that we receive from the Spirit of his Son is that we can now call God "Abba Father". This is the word that little children would use to address their father. It denotes a sense of confidence and boldness in the fact that we know that we will be heard, and God will answer in a way that is best for us. Before we were brought to faith, we were enemies of God running away from him and trying to avoid everything that he wanted for us. Now, with the Spirit of his Son in our heart crying out to God, we want nothing more than to run to him and seek out all the things that we need from him.

What we truly need is our salvation. Through the faith that is worked in our hearts by the Spirit of his Son, we have become heirs of all the things that Jesus earned. He came to redeem those under the law, since he was thoroughly equipped to redeem us, he succeeded. We know that our salvation is a sure thing. We get to spread the news of the Gifts that God sends to all people. By sharing this news, God sends his Gifts to even more people so that they are also saved. We know that these promises are a sure thing.

Even though these great Gifts sometimes slip our mind, they keep on giving to us. God knew when the time came to send us his perfect Gifts. He sent his Son to be born of a woman. We have a savior who is 100% true God and man. This gift of his Son has paid the price for our sins and made us children of God. He also sends the Spirit of his Son onto our heart to make us heirs of salvation. His Spirit turns us from enemies of God into his children who can boldly and confidently come to him with all our requests. These Gifts continue to enrich our lives here on earth and forever in heaven. Only God can send us the Gifts that keep on giving. He sent his Son. He sends the Spirit of his Son.