

THE FULLNESS OF TIME

(Galatians 4.1-7)

November 30th-December 6th, 2014



WELCOME & SHARING

Share any announcements...

- . Our annual **Christmas Party & Hymnsing** is **THIS Friday, December 5th from 6-8pm.**
- . **Christmas Store Saturday, December 13th 2-5pm**
- . **Christmas Eve Worship, 5:30pm December 24th**

Opener Question: Do you send Christmas cards? What's the best one you've ever sent/received/ or even seen?

Intro: We're pretty sure they didn't send greeting cards in the 1st century. But Paul did write an awful lot of letters. And one of the themes he returns to again and again is the significance of the coming of Christ. During Advent this year, we're going to be combing through this letters help us understand Christmas.

STUDY/DISCUSSION

>>READ>> Galatians 4.1-7

- (1) 4:1-2 -- Paul imagines a child-heir of a very rich family. Reflect on this image together. In what ways does this illustrate the condition of a person who is under the law?
- (2) How does the gospel make us "come of age" and bring us a full experience of what has otherwise been promised to God's people?
- (3) 4:4 -- What significance is there in that Christ is "born of a woman"?

(4) 4:4-5 -- What two basic things did God send his son to accomplish?

(5) 4:6-7 -- What are the privileges of adoption as listed in these verses?

NOTE: Many may take offense at using the masculine word "sons" to refer to all Christians, male and female. Some would prefer to translate verse 26 "You are all children of God." But if we are too quick to correct the Biblical language we might miss the revolutionary (and inclusive) nature of what Paul is saying. In most ancient cultures, daughters could not inherit property. Therefore, "son" meant "legal heir" and was a status forbidden to women. But the gospel tells us we are all sons of God in Christ. If we don't let Paul say to women, "In Christ, you too are sons; you too are heirs," then we miss how radical a claim this is.

(6) Discuss the following quote:

"Adoption is not a change in nature, but a change in status. If we fail to see this truth, we will reject the power of our adoption... Adoption is a declaration God makes about us. It is irreversible, dependent entirely upon His gracious choice, in which He says: 'You are my son, today I have brought you into my family.'"

- Sinclair Ferguson, Children of the Living God

(7) 4:6-7 -- What has the Holy Spirit been sent to do? (Read the parallel passage in Romans 8:15-16) How can you grow in your awareness of the Spirit's role in your life?

(8) How does this passage help you understand the significance of Christmas? What will you do during the Christmas season this year to grow in your faith?

PRAYER

Take some time and pray together. You can pray as a large group, break into smaller groups, split up into men and women, etc. If you share prayer requests, post them to the City so that your group can continue to be praying for each other.