

GALATIANS

Message Eight

Sonship—the Focal Point of God’s Economy

Scripture Reading: Gal. 3:26-28; 4:4-7, 19

I. God’s eternal economy is the dispensing of Himself into His chosen people to make them His sons for His corporate expression; sonship is the focal point of God’s economy—Gal. 4:4-7:

- A. God chose us in Christ before the foundation of the world to be holy by predestinating us unto sonship—Eph. 1:4-5:
 - 1. The choosing of God’s people to be holy is for the purpose of their being made sons of God, participating in the divine sonship.
 - 2. To be made holy—to be sanctified by God by His putting Himself into us and then mingling His nature with us—is the process, the procedure, whereas to be sons of God is the aim, the goal, and is a matter of our being joined to the Son of God and conformed to the very image of the firstborn Son of God—Rom. 8:29; Col. 1:15.
- B. Sanctification is for sonship; God’s sanctifying us is His “sonizing” our entire being to make us His sons in a full way—Heb. 2:10-11; 1 Thes. 5:23:
 - 1. The regenerating sanctification in our spirit brings forth many sons of God to form an organism for God’s corporate expression, which is the organic Body of Christ, the church—John 1:12-13; 2 Pet. 1:4; Gal. 3:26.
 - 2. The transforming sanctification in our soul transforms the regenerated believers by renewing and conforming them to the glorious image of Christ that they may become a heritage of worth, a treasure to God as God’s private possession—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Rom. 8:29; Eph. 1:11, 14, 18.
 - 3. The consummating sanctification in our body transfigures the believers’ body by redeeming their vile body into God’s glory that they may be fully and wholly sanctified in their spirit, soul, and body to be a consummated corporation of God’s many sons who are matured in the processed Triune God as

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their life that they may express God as the New Jerusalem for eternity—Phil. 3:21; Rom. 8:23; Rev. 21:2, 7.

- C. We are the sons of God because we have believed and have been baptized into Christ, we have put on Christ, and thus, we are all one in Christ; this is to enter into Christ, to express Christ by living Him, and to practice the church life as the one new man in the reality of the divine sonship—Gal. 3:26-28.

II. Christ's judicial redemption is to bring us out of the custody of the law into the sonship of God that we may enjoy His organic salvation, His divine "sonizing"; the goal of Christ's redemption is sonship—4:4-6; Rom. 5:10:

- A. God "sent forth His Son" for our judicial redemption; God "sent forth the Spirit of His Son" for our organic salvation—Gal. 4:4, 6; 3:13-14:
 - 1. God sent forth His Son, who was born under law, to redeem God's chosen people from the custody of the law that they might receive the sonship and become the sons of God—vv. 23-24; 4:4-5.
 - 2. God sent forth the Spirit of His Son, the Spirit of life (Rom. 8:2), to impart His life with His nature into us that we might become His sons in reality (Gal. 4:6; 1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4).
 - 3. The Spirit of the Son is another form of the Son; when the Son died on the cross, He was Christ, and when He enters into us, He is the Spirit—John 1:14; 1 Cor. 15:45b.
- B. "Because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, Abba, Father!"—Gal. 4:6:
 - 1. *Abba* is an Aramaic word, and *Father* is the translation of the Greek word *Pater*; the combining of the Aramaic title with the Greek title expresses a stronger affection in crying to the Father, implying an intimate relationship in life between a genuine

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son and a begetting father—Mark 14:36; Heb. 5:7; Lam. 3:55-56; cf. Luke 15:1, 20-24.

2. The Spirit of God's Son was sent into our hearts; actually, the Spirit of God came into our spirit at the time of our regeneration (John 3:6; Rom. 8:16), because our spirit is hidden in our heart (1 Pet. 3:4).
 3. On the one hand, we who have received a spirit of sonship cry in this spirit, "Abba, Father!" (Rom. 8:15); on the other hand, the Spirit of God's Son is crying in our hearts, "Abba, Father!" (Gal. 4:6).
 4. This indicates that our regenerated spirit and the Spirit of God are mingled as one (1 Cor. 6:17), and that our spirit is in our heart.
 5. This also indicates that the sonship of God is realized by us through our subjective experience in the depth of our being—cf. Matt. 5:3, 8.
 6. The more we cry, "Abba, Father," in the spirit, the deeper will be the sweet and intimate sense in our heart in our relationship with our Father.
 7. When we cry, "Abba, Father," the Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are God's children, possessing His life; such a witnessing also limits us and restricts us to a living and walk that are according to His life, in keeping with our being children of God—Rom. 8:15-16.
- C. Since we are God's sons, we are also heirs who are qualified to inherit the Father's estate, all the riches of what He is to us, for eternity—4:13-14; 8:17; Gal. 3:29; Titus 3:7.

III. Paul's preaching was to bring forth Christ, the Son of the living God, in the believers; he was travailing that Christ might be formed in them for their full sonship—Gal. 4:19; cf. 1:15-16; 2:20:

- A. To have Christ formed in us is to allow the all-inclusive Spirit, as the blessing of the gospel, to occupy every part of our inner being, to have Christ fully grown in us—3:14; Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.

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- B. Christ's being formed in us is needed that we may be sons of full age and heirs to inherit God's promised blessing, and that we may mature in the divine sonship—Heb. 6:1a.
- C. Christ's being formed in us is for the building up of the Body of Christ to consummate the New Jerusalem as the aggregate of the divine sonship for the corporate expression of the Triune God—2:10; Rev. 21:7, 10-11.