***Introduction…***

**Gal 4:1**I mean that the ***heir***, as long as he is a child, is no different from a ***slave***, though he is the owner of everything, **2**but he is under guardians and managers ***until the date set by his father***. **3**In the same way we also, when we were children, were ***enslaved*** to the elementary principles of the world. **4**But ***when the fullness of time had come***, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, **5*to redeem*** those who were under the law, ***so that we might receive adoption as sons***. **6**And because ***you are sons***, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7*So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.***

I became a believer in Christ on New Year’s Eve in 1998. On that night and in the months leading up to that night I had no interest in religion and zero interest in Christianity; but God had another plan. Two weeks prior to New Year’s Eve, one of my best friends who just happened to be my drug dealer had been born again. My friend’s name was Joel and he had gone away for a couple of weeks to stay with a friend and to his surprise one of the people living in his friend’s home was a faithful Christian who took every opportunity he could to share the gospel with my friend.

Joel came back home a new man and he came straight to my apartment where I and my other friends were just beginning to celebrate the New Year. On that night, Joel came with his Bible and he sat down beside me and he made it clear that I needed to stop doing drugs, turn from my sin, call out to God for forgiveness and trust in Jesus to save me. To this day I don’t know what passage Joel used to share the gospel with me but I know that on that night, right there in my living room, God did something in my heart and mind that changed me forever.

***God changed me from a slave to a son***. For the first time in my life I felt like I was going to be crushed under the weight of my sin. I didn’t know how Jesus could do it but I cried out to him to forgive me and save me. I repented and began to try and live my life for Him. I went to church and was baptized. I was given a new Bible and I began to read it. I was learning, I was growing, I was like a fish out of water but I was learning how to breath in a whole new way.

Everything in my day to day life was new but I was also learning that as a Christian I had become part of something that had been going on for thousands of years. As I read and studied the Bible I came to realize that I had been plunged into a story that had been unfolding since the beginning of time. I didn’t know how all of it fit together but I knew that my faith had a deep past filled with men and women and events that stretched back thousands of years. I wanted to know how it all fit together.

Then I read **Ephesians 1:4** and it blew my mind.

Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in Christ with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places, **4***even as he chose us in him before the foundation of the world*, that we should be holy and blameless before him. In love **5***he predestined us for adoption to himself as sons through Jesus Christ*, according to the purpose of his will

When I read that for the first time I could hardly believe that before the world was, God knew me and chose me. He predestined me for adoption according to His will, and my adoption hinged on Jesus Christ. Jesus was not just another name in an endless story of religious faith, but rather He was the climax of that story. The promises God made to His people from the very beginning of time, found their culmination in the work of Jesus. He was/is the point of the whole book.

All the Scriptures, the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Writings, they all concern Christ. The whole of the Old Testament is drawing our attention to the main stage where God is showcasing the main event which is God’s plan to redeem His people from their slavery to sin through Jesus’ death on the cross and His resurrection 3 days later.

***Transition…***

**There are two great works of God: creation and redemption.** Redemption means deliverance (rescue) from evil by the payment of a price and this concept of redemption can be seen in hundreds of passages throughout the Bible. Redemption has a backstory that goes like this: when mankind rebelled against God two things resulted; our separation from God and our guilt before God. We were expelled from the Garden, cut off from the tree of life and the presence of God; but we also became guilty of treason and deserve death because of our crime.

**Mankind is the problem not the solution**. In Genesis 3 we learn that because of sin God has put a boundary in place between us and Him. Since God is the one who put this boundary in place it only makes sense that He is the only One qualified to cross that boundary and make things right. **Only God can restore the relationship corrupted by sin. We cannot redeem ourselves.**

And from that day in the Garden, God set out to accomplish a work of redemption that would remove the guilt of our sin and bring us back into fellowship with Him. This morning we are going to spend our time studying God’s Work as our Redeemer and we are going to look at this work in five stages: The **Word** of Redemption, the **Pattern** of Redemption, the **Securing** of Redemption, the **Application** of redemption, and the **Enjoyment** of redemption.

***Sermon Focus…***

**I. The Word of Redemption (V. 4a)**

**4:4**But when the fullness of time had come…

In **Galatians 4:1-3**, Paul is trying to help us understand our own backstory by explaining two contrasting ways of identifying ourselves. He is showing the contrast between life as a slave and life as an heir. Slavery and sonship are the two categories of human identity that he wants us to understand. **But these two categories are also a memory of Israel’s past.**

There was a time when the people of God were ***slaves*** in Egypt and they longed to be set free. They longed for God to rescue them and so they cried out to God for help.

**Exo 2:23**…The people groaned because of their slavery and cried out for help. Their cry for rescue from slavery came up to God. **24**And God heard their groaning, and God remembered his covenant with Abraham…

Let the weight of this sink in for you. In **Exodus 3:7f** God says to His chosen covenant people “I have seen your affliction…I have heard your cries…I know what you are walking through ***and I am coming to rescue you***.” The OT writers refer to this covenantal loving care from God as ***Hesed***, His steadfast love.

Friends God sees, He hears, He knows and in the day of our trouble, in the day of our need, in the day of our affliction he remembers his covenant love and pours out strength to rescue us. Do you know what this means, God is for you. When He looks upon you today, Christian, He does not see your sin and your guilt, He sees the righteousness of His Son and He loves you.

(**Illus**. Imagine Israel in the midst of their slavery. They must have felt as though God did not care. They must have felt as though God did not remember them and that he did not hear their cries. Nothing could have been farther from the truth.

During their time of bondage in Egypt God loved His people and in His love He raised up a man, a son, named Moses, who would deliver a message both to the children of Israel and the King of Egypt. ***Here is the message God gave to Moses.***

**Exo 6:6**Say therefore to the people of Israel, ‘I am the Lord, and I will bring you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians, and I will deliver you from slavery to them, and I will redeem you with an outstretched arm and with great acts of judgment. **7**I will take you to be my people, and I will be your God, and you shall know that I am the Lord

This is the word that God sent to His people while in slavery. It is a word of promise that says the day is near at hand when I will step out of Heaven to come and free you from your bondage. God says, “I will deliver you. I will redeem you. I will make you to be my people. I will be your God.”

Now here in **Galatians 4**, Paul wants us to understand that we too have been in slavery.

**3**In the same way we also, when we were children, were ***enslaved*** to the elementary principles of the world. **4**But ***when the fullness of time had come***,

Our identity apart from Christ is that we are slaves to sin. When he says here that we were ***enslaved to the elementary principles of the world*** he is talking about the role of the law in our lives. The law is not what saves us, it only points out that we need to be saved. The law doesn’t make us holy, it simply reveals that we are not holy. The law is like an x-ray machine that shows us that our bones are broken, but the x-ray machine can’t put us back together it can only show us the problem.

We need someone to come and save us, to rescue us, to put our bones back into the right place and that is what God promised to do. He promised that a time would come when He would arrive to redeem us from our slavery.

In the Sovereign and eternal plan of God there was a time, a date set by the Father, when He would act. There would come a time when His plan of redemption would shift into high-gear ***and*** when the fullness of that time had come ***He sent His Son.***

**II. The Pattern of Redemption (V. 4b)**

**V. 4b**…God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law

For Israel, God sent Moses as a prophet who would speak for God and lead His people once they were freed from slavery***. This would become a pattern for how God would redeem His people***. In time He would send them prophets, He would give them priests and He would finally give them a king. **But notice who it is that does the moving…God sent.**

**There are two sending’s in this passage: V. 4 God sent forth His Son, V. 6 God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son**. The pattern of God’s work as redeemer is not that we must reach out to Him and convince Him to love us but that God is reaching out to us convincing us that He loves us. God is the One on the move bringing an end to the winter that has reigned in our hearts.

I didn’t understand this when I first believed but over the years I have come to understand that I can take no credit in my salvation. I was not pursuing God, I did not find God, I did not come to my senses; the truth is that from the very beginning God had planned to come for me. He sent His Son into the world to show us His love and He sent His Spirit into our hearts so that we could be made alive by His love.

**This is the pattern of God’s Work in Redemption.** **He comes to us. Only the gospel teaches us to think this way.** Every religion in the world, except for Biblical Christianity, teaches that in order to be right with God you must do something. Every religious notion in our hearts tells us that in order for God to love us we must make ourselves loveable by becoming moral people, by attending services, by doing good things. But the gospel says, God’s plan to redeem His chosen people from their slavery to sin is going to happen by God coming down to earth not by our climbing our way up to Heaven.

Jesus came because the Father sent Him and when He came he was like one of us. He was born of a woman and born under the law. This means that the way God is going to accomplish His purpose of redemption is not by starting at the top but by going all the way down to the bottom. Jesus became a helpless human child. He came in the world the same way you and I came into the world, as a baby born into this sinful world.

There is no one so low in their sin that Christ can’t save them. He humbled Himself all the way down to become a baby in a manger. He was born under the law so that He could identify with and redeem those who were under the law.

**III. The Securing of Redemption (V. 5a)**

**V. 5a…**to redeem those who were under the law

The key word here is **redeem** and it means that when Jesus came *He secured deliverance for us by making the payment necessary to set us free.* The law could not free us, it could not reign us in and make us fit for God, so what did God do? He came down and reigned us in all on His own. But in order for us to be set free a price had to be paid. Christ paid that price. He paid our ransom.

The cost of our ransom wasn’t cheap. It wasn’t a few pennies’ scraped up from the couch that paid our debt, it wasn’t silver or even gold; it was the precious blood of Christ that paid our ransom. In order for us to be redeemed Christ willingly died. That is the picture that Paul wants us to see. For the blood of Jesus to cover our sins it had to first be poured out in sacrifice. It cost Him.

Redemption, refers to the process of being delivered through payment, that payment is called a ransom. The ransom price was His blood poured out on the cross. He died in our place. He died to set us free from the guilt and power of sin. “The wages of sin is death, but the free gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord (**Rom 6:23**).”

He died to cover our debt, to pay the price required to buy us out of slavery. On the cross, Jesus secured redemption for all of His people, for every human being who would believe in Him and trust in Him for salvation.

In the OT, there was a system of sacrifices that were required for the people to come into the presence of God in worship. But as soon as they walked away they were in need of cleansing once more. Year after year the sacrificial lambs were offered up so that the sins of Israel would once again be washed away. **But Christ offered up a better sacrifice.**

**Hebrews 9:11**But when Christ appeared as a high priest of the good things that have come… **12**he entered once for all into the holy places, not by means of the blood of goats and calves but by means of his own blood, thus securing an ***eternal redemption***.

The sacrifice of bulls and goats was enough to let them get close once a year, but the sacrifice of Christ brings us into the presence of God forever. **The blood of Christ has eternal value.** The worth of Christ is greater than anything you and I can imagine. Thousands and thousands of lambs could shed their blood and it not be equal to one drop issued from Jesus side. His blood saves. His blood redeems and its value is infinite.

The blood of Christ is enough to change our identity from slaves of sin to Sons of God.

**IV. The Application of Redemption (V. 5b)**

**V. 5b**…so that we might receive adoption as sons.

The keyword here is adoption and it means to transfer rights as a member of the family. Christ secured our redemption through the payment of His own blood and now He has applied our redemption by adopting us into the family. This is Amazing Grace.

We were once enemies of God. We were once slaves to sin. We deserved death and judgment but God’s gracious plan was to save us at the immeasurable cost of His own Son and the result is that we now have a seat at God’s table.

God’s family is a rowdy bunch and we fit right in. All the saints that have gone before us were complete failures and sinners. Oh sure, they did some good things but they were all wretched sinners just like you and me. But God loves us despite us. God loves us and wants us in the family, so His work of redemption is not complete until we receive full adoption as sons and daughters.

He could have simply paid all our debts and let us go free, but He took it a step further and said, “I want you to come home with me.” Forgiveness would be like God paying our fine in court so that we could leave as free men, but adoption is when God comes alongside us, slips his arm around our shoulder and squeezes us in as His child. And the benefits of our adoption are incredible.

**V. The Enjoyment of Redemption (V. 6-7)**

**6**And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, “Abba! Father!” **7**So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.

If you are a Christian, then you have a new identity in the eyes of God. This passage tells us who we were apart from Christ, who we are now as born again believers in Christ; and this passage lets us know that God the Father, Son and Holy Spirit are each responsible for the change that has taken place in us.

If you have put your trust in Jesus, it’s because God has done a work in you to redeem you from life as a slave and He has adopted you as His beloved child. Child of God is your new identity and the world can’t understand this, but you must. You are a child of God now and you can stand with confidence, with dignity and with courage knowing that God, your Father, is for you. If God is for you then who can be against you?

As Christians we know that God loved us. That He sent His Son for us. That Christ redeemed us by His blood and God adopted us into His family. We get to call Him, “Abba! Father!” And God has underwritten our inheritance in eternity. Our future is as secure as is the existence of God.

***Conclusion…Access to the tree of life (Rev 22:1-5)***

This story of redemption has been unfolding ever since the Garden of Eden, when Adam and Eve were sent out from God’s presence because of their sin. Even back then God told them that one day He would send a man, a son of Eve, who would come to crush the serpent’s head and bring back the peace that was lost because of sin. One day we would be able to come into the presence of God again and have access to him and to the tree of life.

**Rev 22:1**Then the angel showed me the river of the water of life, bright as crystal, flowing from the throne of God and of the Lamb **2**through the middle of the street of the city; also, on either side of the river, the tree of life with its twelve kinds of fruit, yielding its fruit each month. The leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations. **3**No longer will there be anything accursed, but the throne of God and of the Lamb will be in it, and his servants will worship him. **4**They will see his face, and his name will be on their foreheads. **5**And night will be no more. They will need no light of lamp or sun, for the Lord God will be their light, and they will reign forever and ever.

The story of God’s work in redemption began long ago but it is still unfolding today. If you are a Christian, then this is your story. You may not have fully understood it but you were a slave to your sin and because of His great love for you God determined that He would not allow you to remain in slavery. He sent His Son Jesus to live for you and to die for you. Jesus chose to die in your place to secure your redemption you and to make bring you into His family.

And He is still at work in your heart through the Holy Spirit who will not abandon us nor let us utterly fail. He will guide us all the way home and there is coming a day when we will be home forever. If you are His, He loves you like a son, like a daughter and His love never fails.

**This is the Work of God in Redemption.**

Does this story seem too good to be true? Are the circumstances of your life so difficult that you have assumed that God doesn’t care about you or know what you are going through.

Do you feel as though God has forgotten about your circumstances? Do you think God doesn’t care about you? Do you want God to send the Spirit of His Son into your heart so that you can know Him as your Father?

**Luke 11:13** If you then, who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!