

The Foundations of Faith & the Nature of God

Weekly Devotion #3

Below is a short devotion based on the Week 3 Devotion questions in your Renew: Session 1 handout. You'll get the most out of this devotion if you answer the questions yourself first. The goal is not for you to have the exact same response, but to understand the correct meaning of the Biblical text and then apply it personally in a way that uniquely helps you grow in your knowledge, love, and worship of God.

Galatians 4:4-7 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.

During our previous Renew class, we talked about how there's no single verse in the Bible that offers us a full explanation of the concept of the Trinity. However, there are very clear statements throughout the Bible that only hold together and make sense by understanding God as a Trinity: one God eternally existing in three separate, yet equal persons. These verses in Galatians are one example of something we find throughout the New Testament that we call a "triadic statement:" a statement where Father, Son, and Spirit are presented alongside one another in a unified way. And here in Galatians 4, they're specifically working together to accomplish something for us. What is that something? A change in status - a transformation! Look at verse 7: the goal is that we would no longer be slaves - slaves to fear, sin, and death - but fully adopted sons and daughters of God - heirs of all the promises He made to Abraham and the other forefathers of the faith, promises that we will be blessed and inherit the whole world!

Now, look at how our Trinitarian God accomplished this. First, **God the Father** sent the Son. Next, **the Son** became a Jewish human (born of a woman, under the Jewish Law) and completely satisfied the demands of the Law (first by obeying it perfectly, second by dying to pay the penalty for all the times we broke it). Because He did this on our behalf, through faith in Him we can now be redeemed from the demands of the Law - freely forgiven of our sins and adopted as God's children. How can we know this has happened to us? How can we have the power to live like sons and daughters of God? This is the last part of the Trinitarian chain: God the Father sends the **Spirit** of His Son into our hearts, causing us to cry out like only a true child can, "Abba, Father!" In Romans 5, the Apostle Paul says that God's love has been poured into our hearts through His Spirit. That's just Paul saying the same thing with different words! God makes His fatherly love real and tangible to us through His Spirit living in us and, by doing so, empowers us to live like His children.

Now zoom out and gaze at the beauty of this picture. 1) The **Father** sent the Son at the perfect time according to His **plan for redemption**, 2) the **Son** obeyed the Father and **accomplished the work of redemption**, 3) the Father then sends the **Spirit** of His Son to **apply that redemption** and make it real and active in our lives. And look at the cyclical nature of this work: the Father sends the Son and the Spirit to adopt us as children so that we can cry out to the Father. Father → Son and Spirit → Father. You know what this reminds me of? The image of the dance that C.S. Lewis described¹: how the Father and the Son and the Spirit move in sync with each other, revolve around each other, and point to each other in perfect love. Our salvation is an overflow of this love where the ultimate goal is that we should be brought into it ourselves, like a dry and thirsty land flooded by a life-giving river.

PRAYER: Heavenly Father, thank you for sending your Son and the Spirit of your Son to free us from slavery and make us your children forever. I know you didn't choose to do this out of any lack or loneliness in yourself - you chose to do it out of the sheer overflow of the love that you have in yourself. You are wonderful in the truest sense of the word - when I pause long enough to consider who you are and what you've done, my heart is full of wonder! And yet, at the same time, I have to confess that I don't feel this wonder nearly often or deep enough. I have a hard time sometimes really believing that I'm actually your child - that I'm free and secure and loved forever because of what you've accomplished and not because of anything I've done. So, I find myself wavering between the exhaustion of trying to earn this adoption and the anxious fear of realizing I can never earn it. Free me from both of these extremes by stirring up my heart through your Spirit to cry out with conviction, "Abba, Father!" Let me feel and know the forever love that you have for me and that you proved in the life and death of your Son. And just like you, make me the kind of person that overflows with love for those around me - seeking and longing to draw everyone into your love. Thank you, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

¹ See the ["Foundations of Faith & Nature of God" PowerPoint Slide 37](#).