

Intimacy with God

A Meditation on Galatians 4:1-7.

And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Galatians 4:6, KJV

God's saving lies in His having *sent*. One of the great words in the New Testament is the word "**apostle**." It comes from the verb "to send." It describes the action of a superior to a subordinate. It implies authority and obedience to that authority. "Send" is an action verb that implies a mission, like the President sending an ambassador, or a special envoy, to try and help solve a crisis in a foreign country.

God *sent* the prophets. He sent Moses (Acts 7:35). In the Old Testament, he called those He sent to Israel, "**My servants the prophets**" (Jeremiah 7:25). God sent John. He was "**a man sent from God**" (John 1:6). The Father sent Jesus into the world and He in turn, sent the apostles. "**As Thou didst send Me into the world, I also have sent them into the world**" (John 17:18, NASB; See John 20:21). Being "**sent**," the apostles possessed authority in the church which was not their own, but was based upon the authority of Jesus who delegated it to them and sent them (Matthew 28:16-20). God sends angels. "**And He will send forth His angels with a great trumpet and they will gather together His elect from the four winds, from one end of the sky to the other**" (Matthew 24:31).

In Galatians 4:1-7, Paul, having been called to be an apostle by the Lord Jesus Christ, tells us that God "**sent forth His Son**" and "**has sent forth the Spirit of His Son**" (Verses 4, 6). Literally, God apostled both His Son and the Spirit of His Son to and for believers. This sending did not originate via word of mouth, via written orders down a "chain of command" from superiors to a subordinate. This sending was direct from God and involved all three members of the Trinity. "**God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'**" (Galatians 4:6).

According to His grace, God "apostled" His Son to make us "sons." During the Roman Empire wealthy fathers delegated the raising of their children to "guardians and managers" until a set time (Galatians 4:2). These children had been born into privileged families. In the same way, ancient Israel was considered, of all the other nations in the ancient world, the privileged family of God. But Israel lived without experiencing the full rights and privileges of their relationship to Jehovah until such time that they came of age and the Lord bestowed upon them the rights that were theirs by virtue of the fact that they were His children. Then God sent His Son to redeem, to buy Israel and Gentiles out of the marketplace of sin; then God sent His Spirit to the church. Israel had come of age at the time set by the Father. That nation, provided they would receive the Messiah, graduated from Law to Grace!

By sending His Son, God made possible inheriting the inheritance that belongs to those, both Jews and Gentiles, who are part of His family by faith. As someone has observed: "Christ, by

nature Son of God, became the Son of man that we, by nature the sons of wrath, might become sons of God. Wonderful exchange!" By sending His Spirit, God made possible intimacy with Him for those who by faith are God's sons. In this "closeness," God's children can cry out to Him, "**Abba! Father!**"

Sometime during first part of the 1800s, Catesby Paget wrote a hymn, *A Mind at Peace with God*. The song describes the closeness to God that is ours through faith in Jesus Christ:

Near, so very near to God, I could not nearer be;
For in the Person of God's Son, I am as near as He.
Dear, so very dear to God, Dearer I could not be;
The love with which He loves His Son, That is His love to me.

This relationship is ours because God sent His Son and His Spirit. As Paul describes this intimacy which by faith comes to us, "**Christ in you, the hope of glory**" (Colossians 1:27).