WEEK 3 — HE CAME TO MAKE US SONS AND DAUGHTERS

December 20 — Love

Primary Text: Galatians 4:4–7
Supporting Texts: John 1:12; Romans 8:15–17; John 14:2–3

MAIN POINT

Jesus did more than rescue us from something. He rescued us for something: a relationship with God in which we become His sons and daughters.

Christmas means that through Jesus, people who were far from God can be brought into God's family.

INTRODUCTION

Christmas and family seem almost inseparable.

For many people, some of their favorite Christmas memories involve being home:

A familiar table.
Parents or grandparents.
Children waking up early.
Meals together.
Traditions repeated year after year.

But the word **home** can carry very different emotions.

For some, Christmas brings warmth and gratitude.

For others, it magnifies loneliness.

An empty chair becomes more noticeable.

A strained family relationship becomes harder to ignore.

Distance feels farther.

Loss feels heavier.

And sometimes we can be surrounded by people and still wonder:

Where do I really belong?

Galatians 4 gives us one of the most beautiful answers to the question, **Why Christmas?**

Jesus came so that people who were separated from God could become His sons and daughters.

OPENING DISCUSSION

What Christmas tradition makes somewhere feel like “home” to you?

Why do you think Christmas intensifies both our appreciation for family and our awareness of loneliness or loss?

What does the word **belonging** mean to you?

UNDERSTANDING

READ GALATIANS 4:4–7

Paul describes the entire Christmas story in one sentence:

"When the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law…"

Notice the movement.

God sent His Son.

The Son became like us.

The Son redeemed us.

We received adoption.

The Spirit entered us.

We became heirs.

Christmas moves us from slavery to family.

1. GOD ACTED AT THE PERFECT TIME

Verse 4 begins:

"When the fullness of time had come…"

Jesus did not arrive randomly.

God had been preparing history for this moment.

By the first century, several circumstances helped the gospel move rapidly throughout the ancient world:

- Roman roads connected major population centers.
- Greek was widely spoken across the Roman world.
- Roman rule produced an unusual degree of travel and political stability.

God was also fulfilling centuries of biblical promise.

The timing belonged to Him.

For generations, God's people waited.

Then, **"when the fullness of time had come,"** God acted.

That is an important reminder for people who are waiting today.

God's delay is not the same thing as God's absence.

DISCUSSION

Why is waiting so difficult for us?

Where are you currently tempted to interpret God's timing as God's inactivity?

How does Christmas remind us that God may be working long before we can see what He is doing?

2. GOD'S SON BECAME LIKE US

Paul describes Jesus in two ways:

“Born of woman.”

Jesus became fully human.

“Born under the law.”

Jesus entered the same world of obligation in which God's people lived.

But there was a crucial difference.

Jesus obeyed where humanity had failed.

He lived the life we could not live and ultimately took the judgment our sin deserved.

God did not rescue humanity from a distance.

He came near.

John 1:14 says:

“The Word became flesh and dwelt among us.”

The love of God is not merely something God announced.

At Christmas, God's love moved toward us.

DISCUSSION

What does the incarnation teach us about the character of God?

Why does it matter that Jesus did not save humanity from a safe distance?

Where do you most need to remember that God has moved toward you rather than away from you?

3. JESUS REDEEMED US SO WE COULD BE ADOPTED

Verse 5 tells us why Jesus came:

“To redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons.”

Redemption means being purchased out of bondage.

But notice something important.

God did not simply release prisoners and tell them they were free to go.

He brought them home.

Salvation includes forgiveness.

But it is more than forgiveness.

We are welcomed into God's family.

John 1:12 says:

“But to all who did receive him, who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God.”

An adoption hearing gives us a small picture.

A child can enter a courtroom with one legal identity and leave belonging to a new family—with a new standing and a new inheritance.

The gospel goes even farther.

Through Christ, people who were once separated from God receive the full standing of sons and daughters.

DISCUSSION

Which truth is easier for you to believe: **God has forgiven me** or **God delights in receiving me as His child**?

Why might someone believe God tolerates them without really believing He welcomes them?

How should our identity as God's children affect the way we view ourselves?

4. WE CAN KNOW GOD AS FATHER

Verse 6 says:

“God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, ‘Abba! Father!’”

Christianity is not merely knowing things about God.

Through Christ, we can **know God.**

“Abba” reflects the language of family relationship and personal access.

The holy God of the universe becomes the Father of those who are united with Christ.

This does not make God casual or diminish His holiness.

It makes our access to Him remarkable.

The Spirit gives believers the assurance that they really belong to God's family.

DISCUSSION

What experiences with earthly fathers or authority figures can make it difficult for people to think of God as Father?

Why is it important to allow Scripture—not our human experiences—to define what God's fatherhood is like?

What difference should knowing God as Father make in the way you pray?

5. WE HAVE AN INHERITANCE

Paul finishes:

“So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God.”

An heir has a future.

The Christian's greatest hope is not simply that today's problems improve.

We are waiting for our full inheritance.

Jesus promised:

“In my Father's house are many rooms… I go to prepare a place for you.” — John 14:2

For Christians, the deepest longing for home will ultimately be fulfilled.

A final homecoming is coming.

A day is coming when:

- separation ends,
- grief ends,
- sin ends,
- death ends,
- and God's children are finally home with Him.

That is Christian hope.

DISCUSSION

What do you most look forward to about the promise of being fully with Christ?

How can remembering our future inheritance change the way we live now?

How does the promise of our ultimate home speak to someone experiencing loneliness or grief at Christmas?

APPLICATION

The Advent theme this week is **love**.

Christmas is one of the clearest demonstrations of God's love because God did not merely send assistance.

He sent His Son.

And Jesus did not merely come to improve your circumstances.

He came to bring you home.

That means our deepest identity is not found in:

our career,
our success,
our failures,
our marital status,
our family background,
our reputation,
our possessions,
or even the opinions of other people.

For those who are in Christ:

You belong to God.

You have a Father.

You have brothers and sisters.

You have an inheritance.

You have a home.

PERSONAL DISCUSSION

Where are you most tempted to look for your identity or sense of belonging apart from Christ?

During Christmas, when do you feel most “at home”? When do you feel most alone?

How could our LIFEGroup become more like a spiritual family for someone who needs belonging this Christmas?

Is there someone God may be prompting you to make room for during the Christmas season?

Complete the sentence:

“Because I am God's son/daughter, I do not have to _____ anymore.”

PRAYER

Because this lesson focuses on adoption, consider allowing a longer time for prayer.

Thank God for:

- sending His Son,
- redeeming us,
- adopting us,
- giving us His Spirit,
- and promising us an eternal inheritance.

Pray for people experiencing grief or loneliness during Christmas.

Pray that your LIFEGroup would increasingly become a place where people experience what it means to be welcomed into family.

Pray that through your group:

- **You BELONG here**
- **We BECOME like Jesus together**
- **Others BENEFIT through sharing**

would increasingly become visible realities rather than simply words.

BETWEEN-WEEK PRACTICE

MAKE ROOM

Christmas reminds us that God moved toward us.

This week, intentionally move toward someone else.

Invite someone to a meal.

Call someone who may be lonely.

Include someone who might otherwise be overlooked.

Reconnect with someone you have not seen recently.

Welcome someone into your normal Christmas rhythm.

Do not make this complicated.

Simply ask:

“Who might need to know this week that they have a place?”

Then act on the answer.

COMMENTARY

Galatians 4:4 — “The fullness of time”

Paul's primary point is theological: God acted at His appointed time in redemptive history. Roman roads, widespread Greek, and relative political stability provide interesting historical context, but they should not become the main interpretation of the phrase.

“God sent forth his Son”

The wording assumes the Son's existence before His human birth and supports the Christian understanding of Christ's preexistence.

“Born of woman”

Jesus possessed genuine humanity. The eternal Son truly entered human existence.

“Born under the law”

Jesus entered the covenant obligations of God's people and fulfilled them perfectly. His obedience is central to His saving work.

Adoption

Roman adoption provides useful historical background because adoption granted legal standing and inheritance rights. Paul's larger point is spiritual: believers receive a new relationship, new identity, and new standing before God.

“Abba”

Avoid overstating the popular claim that *Abba* simply means “Daddy.” It communicates genuine intimacy and family relationship while still carrying respect.

Doctrinal Guardrail

Our adoption does not mean every person is automatically a child of God in the saving sense Paul describes. All people are created by God and possess dignity as His image-bearers, but the New Testament connects adoption as God's sons and daughters with receiving Christ through faith.