



WEEK 4

GALATIANS CHAPTER 4

WEEK 4

DAY 22 - MONDAY

Galatians 4:1-7, John 14:1-21

The passages in John focus on the fact that we keep His commandments (the law) because we love Him, not out of a posture of earning anything from Him, but in response to His love for us, this is what living in freedom in Christ looks like.

FREEDOM IN CHRIST

When I started reading the Bible in my 20s, I found something completely different than I was expecting. It wasn't the drudgery that my childhood friends described. It wasn't lists of rules and commands that left us hopeless and helpless. It was something wondrous. Life-giving, I dare say. Words that told me that God takes people who were orphaned by sin, and makes them part of His family. He adopts them as His sons and daughters (John 14:18). Heirs, the Bible called them (Gal. 4:7). And after I believed, after I recognized the only way to the Father was through the One who called Himself the "way, the truth, and the life" (John 14:6), I kept noticing many people who struggled with the same sort of begrudging attitude toward Christianity that my childhood friends had with their catechism classes. They were exhausted, trying to work for what God had already given them. It was like they had forgotten that "there is no Jew or Greek, slave or free male or female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus" (Gal. 3:28). They lived as slaves instead of sons (and daughters) and heirs of the promise. I swore that this wouldn't happen to me. Until it happened to me. Not too long ago, I was tired, running on empty. Something was off. I was working so hard that I took my eyes off the gospel's greatness for myself. So, I turned to the Scriptures once again. And in Galatians, I was once again reminded of this good news: in Christ, I am a child of God. I am adopted into God's family. I am an heir according to God's promises (Gal. 3:29). And because of this, I know I am going to enjoy eternity with Him forever—not because of anything that I do, but all because of Christ, the way, the truth, and the life.

Written by Aaron Armstrong - *He Reads Truth*

DID YOU NOTICE THAT IN GALATIANS 4:7, PAUL SUDDENLY SHIFTS FROM THE PLURAL YOU TO THE SINGULAR YOU, POINTING A FINGER AT THE READER?

DO YOU BELIEVE THIS MESSAGE OF DELIVERANCE IS NOT ONLY FOR PEOPLE IN GENERAL BUT FOR YOU PERSONALLY?

HOW DOES THIS TRUTH CHANGE YOUR HEART TODAY?

WEEK 4

DAY 23 - TUESDAY

Galatians 4:1-7, Romans 8:1-17

Reading these Galatians passages again alongside these passages from Romans helps us to further understand what Paul is trying to tell these Christians at Galatia. Romans 8:15-17 says, *"For you did not receive the spirit of slavery to fall back into fear, but you have received the Spirit of adoption as sons, by whom we cry, 'Abba! Father!' The Spirit himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God, and if children, then heirs—heirs of God and fellow heirs with Christ, provided we suffer with him in order that we may also be glorified with him."*

LIVING AS A AN HEIR WITH CHRIST

So for a child of God, there is confidence and boldness every day. We don't walk in fear of anyone or anything; our Father owns the place! God will honor us as He honors His one and only Son. We live with heads held high. Our sonship removes the fear of missing fulfillment or losing approval that is at the root of much of our disobedience. So there are two specific steps we can take in order to have a deeper experience of our sonship. First, we must put aside significant time to study the work of the Son, asking the Spirit to illuminate us and make it real to us. We must learn to meditate on the Bible; to connect our prayer to our study and our study to our prayer. Second, we must "cry out" to our Father spontaneously, throughout the day. We must, in other words, analyze and address the issues of everyday life by remembering His fatherly love. We need to learn to ask, moment by moment: Am I acting like a slave who is afraid of God, or like a child who is assured of my Father's love? And as we cry "Abba, Father" in our lives, the Spirit does His work, assuring us "that we are God's children ... co-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17), and so flooding our hearts with life-changing assurance.

Written by Tim Keller - *Galatians For You*

**HOW DO TODAY'S
SCRIPTURES IMPACT YOU?**

**WHAT DO THEY SHOW YOU
ABOUT WHO GOD IS?**

**WHAT DO THEY SHOW YOU
ABOUT YOURSELF?**

WEEK 4

DAY 24 - WEDNESDAY

Galatians 4:8-20, Romans 1:18-25

PAUL'S CONCERN FOR THE GALATIANS

In these Galatians passages, we see Paul pleading with the Galatians to "become as I am, for I also have become as you are." This is not because Paul wants to elevate himself, but because he hopes that they can see Christ working in His life. He desires deeply for them to find the freedom in Christ that he has found. Paul describes this as "I am again in the anguish of childbirth until Christ is formed in you!" Paul has been where they are and wants to show them a better way. He warns in the Romans passages that they might have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and are serving the created rather than the creator. Paul wants them to look at his life and see the gospel changing him. Tim Keller says it this way, *"Paul has been so personally open about his own heart and so consistent in his own life that he can invite the Galatians to imitate him. Our words are not sufficient for (and maybe not even most important in) persuading others about the truth of Christ. People have to be able to look into our hearts and lives, to assess how we handle trouble, how we deal with disappointment and interruptions, how we conduct our relationships, how we feel and act, so that they can see whether Christ is real and how the gospel affects a day-to-day human life. Generally, we find faith mainly through relationships with joyful, flawed-but-honest, loving Christians, not through arguments, information and books."*

DOES PAUL'S ZEAL FOR THE GALATIANS COMPEL YOU TO SHARE WITH OTHERS HOW JESUS IS CHANGING YOU?

WHO IN YOUR LIFE NEEDS TO SEE YOU AS A "JOYFUL, FLAWED-BUT-HONEST, LOVING CHRISTIAN"?

PRAY ABOUT HOW GOD CAN USE YOUR LIFE AS A TESTIMONY TO OTHERS THAT THE GOSPEL IS REAL.

WEEK 4

DAY 25 - THURSDAY

Galatians 4:21-31, Genesis 16:1-16, Romans 9:6-8

See pages 40-41 for more detail about these passages.

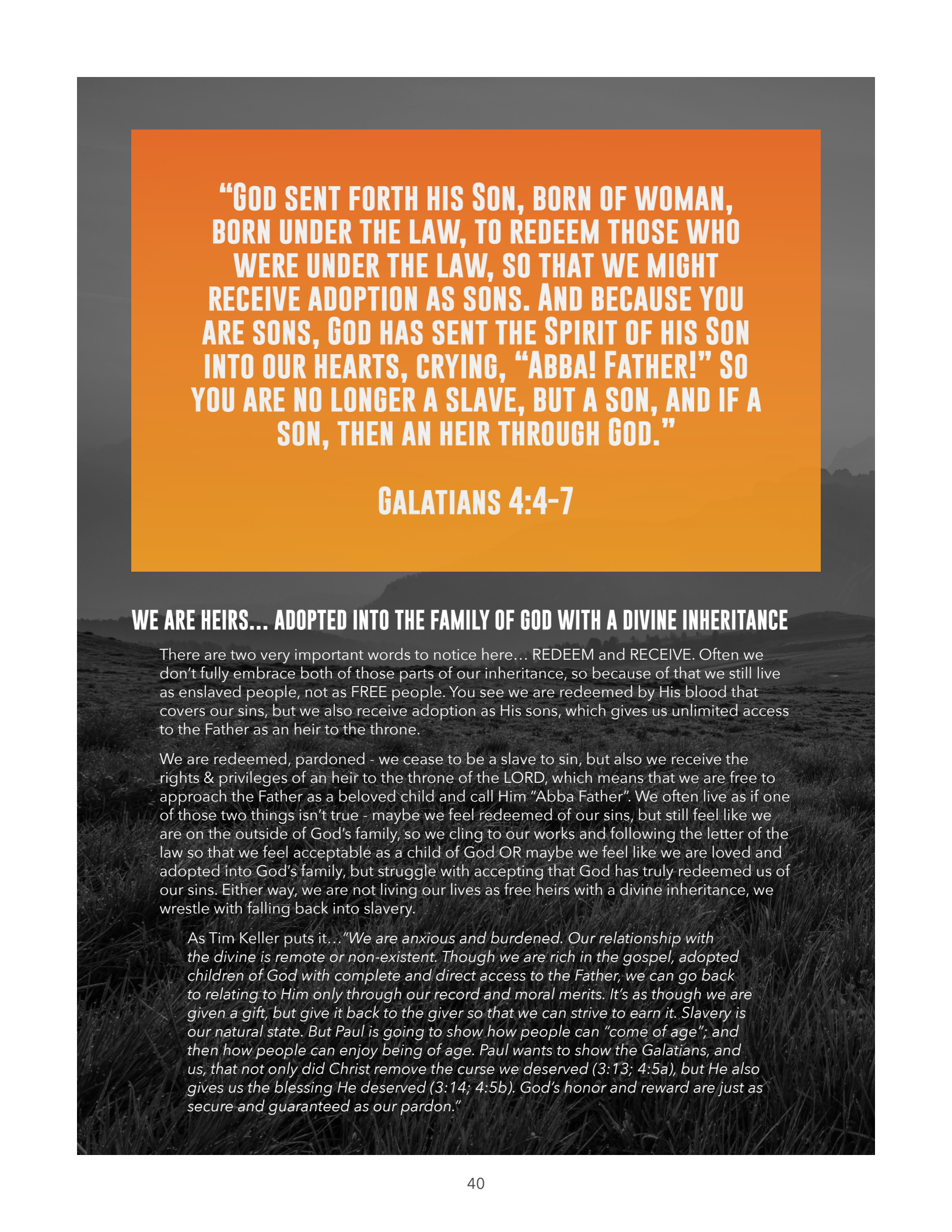
CHILDREN OF PROMISE

In these passages, Paul showed (the Galatians) another way to read the Old Testament, to see themselves in the story, not as outsiders, but as real and true descendants of Abraham and heirs of God's promises. Long before the law was given to Moses, there was Abraham, and he was an outsider until God invited him in, not because of anything he had done, but simply on the basis of faith. Abraham had two sons—Ishmael and Isaac. Ishmael was the son of the slave woman, Hagar, and the result of Abraham taking God's promises into his own hands. Isaac, on the other hand, was the child given to Abraham and Sarah. His birth was *unnatural*. It was miraculous. And it was through this miracle child, Isaac, that God's promises came down through history. Like Isaac, the Galatians were "unnatural" children of God. They, too, were part of God's family by way of a miracle. "Now you too, brothers and sisters, like Isaac, are children of promise" (Galatians 4:28). God's family is made up of men, women, and children who enter in by faith, in fulfillment of the promises God spoke to Abraham. Being a Jew or a Gentile means nothing. What matters is Christ. We can belong to the family of God, not because of who our parents are or because of how well we obey, but simply because Jesus paid the price and invites us to enter in by faith. Thanks be to God!

Written by John Greco - *He Reads Truth*

**WHAT DID YOU LEARN ABOUT
GOD IN TODAY'S READING?**

**WHAT DOES BEING A "CHILD
OF PROMISE" MEAN TO YOU?**



**“GOD SENT FORTH HIS SON, BORN OF WOMAN,
BORN UNDER THE LAW, TO REDEEM THOSE WHO
WERE UNDER THE LAW, SO THAT WE MIGHT
RECEIVE ADOPTION AS SONS. AND BECAUSE YOU
ARE SONS, GOD HAS SENT THE SPIRIT OF HIS SON
INTO OUR HEARTS, CRYING, “ABBA! FATHER!” SO
YOU ARE NO LONGER A SLAVE, BUT A SON, AND IF A
SON, THEN AN HEIR THROUGH GOD.”**

GALATIANS 4:4-7

WE ARE HEIRS... ADOPTED INTO THE FAMILY OF GOD WITH A DIVINE INHERITANCE

There are two very important words to notice here... REDEEM and RECEIVE. Often we don't fully embrace both of those parts of our inheritance, so because of that we still live as enslaved people, not as FREE people. You see we are redeemed by His blood that covers our sins, but we also receive adoption as His sons, which gives us unlimited access to the Father as an heir to the throne.

We are redeemed, pardoned - we cease to be a slave to sin, but also we receive the rights & privileges of an heir to the throne of the LORD, which means that we are free to approach the Father as a beloved child and call Him "Abba Father". We often live as if one of those two things isn't true - maybe we feel redeemed of our sins, but still feel like we are on the outside of God's family, so we cling to our works and following the letter of the law so that we feel acceptable as a child of God OR maybe we feel like we are loved and adopted into God's family, but struggle with accepting that God has truly redeemed us of our sins. Either way, we are not living our lives as free heirs with a divine inheritance, we wrestle with falling back into slavery.

As Tim Keller puts it... "We are anxious and burdened. Our relationship with the divine is remote or non-existent. Though we are rich in the gospel, adopted children of God with complete and direct access to the Father, we can go back to relating to Him only through our record and moral merits. It's as though we are given a gift, but give it back to the giver so that we can strive to earn it. Slavery is our natural state. But Paul is going to show how people can "come of age"; and then how people can enjoy being of age. Paul wants to show the Galatians, and us, that not only did Christ remove the curse we deserved (3:13; 4:5a), but He also gives us the blessing He deserved (3:14; 4:5b). God's honor and reward are just as secure and guaranteed as our pardon."

AN ALLEGORY OF THE GOSPEL

(Paul's Allegory in Galatians 4:21-31)

In Galatians 4:21-31, Paul uses an allegory to further explore this idea of living enslaved by the law vs living free in Christ. This allegory uses the story from Genesis of Sarah and Hagar. This church in Galatia would likely have been familiar with this story and the false teachers were likely using this story to spread a false gospel. Abraham and Sarah tried to take things into their own hands. Tim Keller explains, "Abraham had two sons, Ishmael and Isaac, by two different women. And they were born in very different circumstances, which are crucial to understanding the point Paul is making. God had promised that He would provide Abraham with an heir. But he was old, his wife Sarah was barren, and he had lived in this land for a decade without children. So Sarah suggested that Abraham sleep with her maidservant, Hagar, so they could "build a family through her" (Gen. 16:1-2). "Abraham agreed", Hagar conceived, and Ishmael was born.

Fourteen years later, when Abraham was one hundred, he had another child, this time by his barren wife. "The Lord did for Sarah what he had promised. Sarah became pregnant and bore a son to Abraham in his old age ... Abraham gave the name Isaac to the son Sarah bore him" Paul sums up the differences in births when he says: "[The] son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was born as the result of a promise" (Gal 4:23). Taken in this narrow, figurative sense, Hagar's son (Ishmeal) represents seeking salvation by works, and Sarah relying on salvation by God's grace. This is a really interesting analogy. The gospel is that we do not try to attain a righteousness that our abilities can develop. Rather, we are to receive a righteousness provided through supernatural acts of God in history. We need to rely on God—just as Abraham eventually learned that he needed the miraculous work of God to provide him with a son and heir. As Abraham needed to switch his faith from his own efforts to God's supernatural work, so these Galatian Christians need to look back to Christ's work, rather than at their own law-keeping efforts. Therefore there are two ways of being related to Abraham: one right way and one wrong way. It is a brilliant argument."

LIVING ENSLAVED BY THE LAW

RELYING ON OUR OWN WORKS FOR SALVATION

OLD COVENANT - PRE-JESUS

REPRESENTED BY HAGAR - SLAVE

CHILD BY FLESH/WORKS - ISHMAEL

DECENDANTS OF ISHMAEL - PERSECUTORS

NO INHERITANCE

LIVING FREE IN CHRIST BY GRACE

RELYING ON THE POWER OF GOD WORKING IN & THROUGH US

NEW COVENANT - FULFILLED IN JESUS

REPRESENTED BY SARAH - FREE

CHILD BY PROMISE/SPIRIT - ISAAC

DECENDANTS OF ISAAC - PERSECUTED

HEIRS WITH FULL INHERITANCE

WEEK 4

DAY 26 - FRIDAY

Galatians 4:6,31, John 8:31-36

FREE INDEED

Paul's message throughout Galatians 4 is that we have been set free because when we accepted Jesus, we were given the gift of the Spirit to live within us. Yet our human nature wants to run back to slavery being bound by our efforts to earn His love and being bound by the lies of the enemy that say we are not redeemed or loved by God. In these John passages, we see Jesus say, "If the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." Do you believe you are free?

**SPEND SOME TIME TODAY
PROCESSING GALATIANS 4
AND ALL THE ADDITIONAL
PASSAGES THAT WE READ
THIS WEEK.**

**WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO BE
"FREE INDEED"?**

WEEK 4

DAY 27 - SATURDAY - GRACE DAY

Use today to rest, pray and catch up on any of this week's reading that you missed.

In this week's reading:

1. *What themes did you see emerge?*
2. *What was the biggest thing that God revealed to you this week?*
3. *What next step do you need to take based on what He revealed to you this week?*

WEEK 4

DAY 28 - SUNDAY - REFLECTION DAY

Reflect on these passages:

"But when the fullness of time had come, God sent forth his Son, born of woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, so that we might receive adoption as sons. And because you are sons, God has sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, crying, 'Abba! Father!'" So you are no longer a slave, but a son, and if a son, then an heir through God."

Galatians 4:4-7

"If you love me, you will keep my commandments. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Helper, to be with you forever, even the Spirit of truth, whom the world cannot receive, because it neither sees him nor knows him. You know him, for he dwells with you and will be in you. 'I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you.'"

John 14:15-18

"There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. For the law of the Spirit of life has set you free in Christ Jesus from the law of sin and death. For God has done what the law, weakened by the flesh, could not do. By sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and for sin, he condemned sin in the flesh, in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Romans 8:1-4

REFLECTION QUESTIONS FOR WEEK FOUR:

What verses impacted you the most this week?

What does living free mean to you now after what we have read this week? Has your perspective changed?