

Immanuel (Augsburg) Lutheran Church
Shobonier, Illinois
Pentecost 2C (Proper 6C)
June 22, 2025
Galatians 3:23 – 4:7

God's New Deal - A Great Deal

Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. (Galatians 3:23-26 ESV)

Dearly Beloved in Christ, the only Savior of the world:

You may have noticed something different today. Not only has the temperature turned hot, but the paraments on the altar, pulpit, and lectern are green. That's because today begins a long season in the church year, the Sundays after Pentecost and after Trinity, which is sometimes called "the long green meadow." Likewise, this part of the year is called "ordinary time" in liturgical lingo, but it is anything but ordinary! Christ will be here with us during these months, leading us, guiding us, teaching us, calling us to follow Him. This is a great time of growth for the church: growing in our discipleship, growing in the fruits of the Spirit.

Our growth begins with God's New Deal. Now you may have heard of FDR's New Deal or AOC's Green New Deal. But God's New Deal is so much better than any other, and it is for you.

And how we needed a new deal! Because the old one had us in a bad way. Paul describes it when he says, "Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed." That was our condition under the law, God's law, His commandments that we are supposed to keep.

To be sure, God's law is good. It is pure and holy and wise. God's law, His commandments, are the best way for us to live. We were meant to love God with our whole heart. We were meant to love our neighbor as ourselves. God's commandments tell us: Don't worship anything or anyone else. Treasure God's name and His Word. Honor and respect your parents. Respect your neighbor's person and property, his reputation and relationships. Be content with what God has given you, trusting that He'll take care of you. Those are His commandments. It's the right way to live. Our Creator knows what's best for us. God's law is His good design for living.

Yes, God's law is good. The problem is, we aren't. All of us, each one of us, has broken God's commandments. We have not kept His law as we ought. We have sinned, in thought, word, and deed, in what we have done, in what we have left undone. Our sin separated us from God. The law convicts us and condemns us as sinners. We're all thrown in prison, and there's

no way out. Our appeals are unsuccessful. "Hey, I'm better than that other guy over there, aren't I?" Sorry, that won't cut it; you're still guilty. "How about if I try to work my way out, try harder?" Nope, you'd still fall short. So, as Paul says, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned. And this was no escape room. This was a death chamber.

That was the old deal. And it's not pretty. The law had us crushed under its weight. Our status was no better than slaves. We thought if we just try harder, maybe we could work our way out, work our way into freedom. But it doesn't work that way. Slaves we were, and slaves we would remain, laboring under the old deal.

But God knew this, and He had mercy on us. He did something we could never do. He brought us out of our captivity. He sprung us from our imprisonment under the law. He set us free from our slavery, even as Jesus freed the demoniac from His bondage to the legion of demons (Luke 8:26-39). This is God's new deal, and it is so much better!

How did He do it? What has God done to set us free? Paul tells us: "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." Friends, this is God's new deal, His new covenant. This is how our status gets changed from slaves to sons.

It all revolves around God's one and only eternal Son, Jesus Christ. God loved us such that He sent His Son into our world, in order to redeem us, to set us free. The Son of God came in the flesh, as our brother. He was born of a human mother, as we were. He was born under the law, meaning that He would keep and fulfill God's law, perfectly, in our stead. Jesus kept the commandments that we broke. And even though He was sinless, Jesus suffered the punishment that God's law requires of sinners, for justice to be done. Jesus died on the cross, taking the utter abandonment and the judgment of God that we sinners deserve.

This is how we are redeemed; this is how we are set free. Because there is One who has kept God's law the way it is supposed to be kept, and His righteousness gets credited to our account. There is One who has taken the punishment that the whole world deserves. He took the rap for all of us. And because He is the holy Son of God, His death is able to cover us all. And so our death sentence has already been served. Jesus does it all! Law fulfilled, sins forgiven! Sinner, you are set free! Jesus did it for you!

This is God's new deal, and it comes to you absolutely free of charge. Oh, it was very costly, infinitely so. But you didn't have to pay it. Christ already paid the bill on your behalf. Take the free gift. It's yours. This is what faith is. It's simply receiving the gifts God gives you.

God gave you this free gift in Holy Baptism. There your sins were washed away. In Baptism you were joined to Jesus, united with Christ. Now what Jesus gets, you get. That's a great deal! God has taken you for His own dear child. You are His son, in fact.

Listen to what Paul says: “In Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

See, you have been clothed with the white robe of Christ’s righteousness. Like the prodigal son, you may have thought you could work your way back into your Father’s good graces. But no, God doesn’t want a slave, He wants you as a son. “Quick! Put the best robe on this one! Let’s celebrate! I’ve got my son back!”

Now, ladies, this applies also to you. How so? Because traditionally, it was the son who received the inheritance. And that’s how Paul runs it. He says of those baptized into Christ: “And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.” You are sons and heirs! This is great! You’ve got an inheritance waiting for you, stored up in heaven. Eternal life is yours! It’s written right into the will. You will share in Christ’s inheritance—His resurrection, His eternal life. Jesus even gives you a pledge of this here in His Supper, the meal of God’s new deal, the new covenant in Christ’s blood.

So, you are all God’s sons, His dearly loved children. “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.” Dear friends, now we know God as our kind and loving heavenly Father. We know He will take care of us. We know He hears our prayers. Jesus even gave us a prayer to call on God as our Father. We have access now. We don’t have to make an appointment. We don’t have to wait in the waiting room. We can walk right in. Our heavenly Father invites us to come to Him for whatever we need.

“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.” Adoption as sons. That’s what God our Father has done for us! God has adopted us and made us His sons. This is God’s new deal, His new covenant in Christ Jesus, and it lasts forever. Brothers and sisters in Christ, rejoice, because in this new deal God our Father has changed our status from slaves to sons. Amen.

The peace of God, which passes all understanding, keep your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Rev. Timothy J. Landskroener