

Second Sunday after Pentecost

Power that Kills and Power that Makes Alive

Galatians 3:23-29

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Analysis by Glenn L. Monson

²³ Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. ²⁴ Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith. ²⁵ But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, ²⁶ for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. ²⁷ As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

“ There is no longer Jew or Greek; there is no longer slave or free; there is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus.
Galatians 3:28 ”



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The Word comes from on high, from the truly Powerful One, “You are no longer defined by the world’s systems. You are now completely free of all labels, save one: child of God.

DIAGNOSIS: Power that Kills

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem): Power Structures

We like hierarchies, especially when we are on the top of the food chain. Jews and Greeks, slaves and free, male and female –

those are distinctions that make sense to us. Like the old rabbi said, "Thank you God, that I was born neither a slave, nor a Gentile, nor a woman." We aren't sure exactly why we were born with privilege, but we sure aren't going to upset the system by making a fuss about it.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem): In Power We Trust

Not only do we like distinctions being made between people, we trust them. When everyone stays in their "God-given" lane, life is predictable. We find security in believing that it's God's idea to have a continuum of power where certain types are always in charge and others are not. We live under the illusion that this system works for everybody.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem): The End of Power

The trouble with our trust in power systems is that it is totally a law-based system. There is no grace. Everyone is locked in, and even those who are in the power positions can never be free, because finally this system will find them dispensable as well. You are getting old? Too bad; you're out. You are injured or ill? Sorry to hear that; you're done. You are no longer able to perform up to the standards that have been set? That's okay; we'll get someone who can.



The Good Shepherd at St Johns Ashfield in Australia [Wikipedia](#)

PROGNOSIS: Power that Makes Alive

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution): The Truly Powerful One

Jesus didn't live up to the world's power standards, so he was put to death. But God's power tramples on human systems of power, so God raised his Son from the dead. No longer subject to death, Jesus claimed the power to undo the world's death-dealing power. He joins us to the life that is his. With one splash of water and a Word from on high, the power system is broken, and One whose sandal we are not worthy to untie is shown to be truly

in charge. "You are a child of God!" we hear. The Word comes from on high, from the truly Powerful One, "You are no longer defined by the world's systems. You are now completely free of all labels, save one: child of God.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution): In Christ We Trust

Through faith in Jesus Christ, you have been born anew and your status in this world is no longer relevant to life under God. We look around and notice that we are clothed in finery: Christ adorns us. We are handed the last will and testament of our Lord and notice that we belong to Christ, we are Abraham's offspring, and we are heirs according to the promise. "What did we do to merit this?" we ask. "Nothing," comes the reply. We no longer have need for any power structures, for all that we need is found in Christ. We are secure.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution): Grace Reigns in Our Lives

As free children of God, we begin to recognize ways that we can extend grace to others. We no longer treat people according to their assigned station in the world's system, but we treat them according to the mercy we have been shown. We no longer make distinctions based on false criteria, but we treat all people as beloved by God. Power belongs to God and not us, and in that we are content.