

“CHRISTMAS GIFTS (#6): THE GIFT OF ROYAL HERITAGE”

(Galatians 4:4-7)

© 2008 Rev. Cindy D. Campbell

**[Prop Needed: Surprise Wrapped Christmas Gift Representing a Royal Heritage]**

[East Cobb U.M.C.; 12-28-08]

**[ALL Services:]** Read Text: Galatians 4:4-7 and Pray.

1. Today we are continuing a series called Christmas Gifts in which we are talking about some of the “gifts” that God our heavenly Father desires to give to each of us.

A–So far we have talked about the gifts of Hope, Comfort, and Joy, and Humble Servant, and we’ve introduced them each week by opening a surprise package containing something that represents them.

B–This week our focus is learning how to take on the mantle of Royal Heritage that God has given each of us, so let’s see what the worship team has wrapped up to represent it... **[OPEN GIFT and briefly talk about how it relates to “Royal Heritage”...]**

Film Clip: Princess Diaries

After film clip:

2. Would you say that you might respond similarly to an announcement that you are a royal heir? Shut your mouth, I am not Royalty! A prince or princess of beautiful kingdom? I know I would. I would be saying-- are you kidding. Where are the cameras – you know from Candid Camera? Would you shake your head in denial and say – “Not me?” It would be hard to believe that a regular people like us could be royalty.

A. There are many stories from childhood of reluctant royals like this story of Princess Mia. Ever heard of Queen Esther? She has her own book in the Bible. Esther was a Jewish refugee and orphan who found her way to the palace. Remember the person who wrote the Psalms? King David – he was anointed by God as a young man to be Israel’s king.

B. In both of these cases, Esther and David were not likely to have been royal heirs if God had not intervened in their lives. In both cases, Esther and David had to choose to take on the royal mantle.

3. Our theme today comes from Galatians 4 where Apostle Paul is reminding the Galatians that they are no longer slaves or children.

A. In the culture of the day children and slaves were on the same rung of the social ladder. They had no voice, no rights.

B. Paul is reminding the Galatians and us that God now adopts us through Jesus Christ’s redeeming act to be the sons and daughters of God. As we are adopted through Christ’s redeeming act on the cross, we have the full rights of Royal Heirs.

C. The gift we receive through our personal relationship with Christ is becoming a Son or Daughter of God. Recognizing our distinction of being God's sons or daughters is important to our continued Christian growth.

4. As stunning as Christmas may be for some of us, the aftermath of the holidays is sometimes a letdown. We do not "feel" the Christmas spirit. And a result, we may sometimes live as though we are not heirs to the King of Kings. I would dare say that many of us would be like Princess Mia in the film clip, feeling out of place in our newly acknowledged royal status. We do not know how to behave or act.

A. We walk around as though we are slaves to this world. We allow the cultural demands of our society to tell us how we should live. What will the kids in my class think if I do not take their dares to misbehave instead acting as though, I belong to Christ? What will the people at the tennis courts think of me if I pray in front of them? What will my boss think if I bring my Bible to work, so that I work on my Bible study on my lunch hour? Why did I tell the pastor I would serve on that committee again? We have to wake up each day and decide today, "I will live like I am the child of the King that I am."

B. Our Royal privilege is also a Royal duty to behave as though we are royalty. Paul tells us that we are no longer children in God's eyes. We have been redeemed and we have made the decision to follow Jesus. Nevertheless, we tend to want to cling to our childhood days – we do not want to be grown up Christians and act as though we are Royal Heirs to God's Throne of Grace. As United Methodists, we can call our acceptance of our Royal status – Sanctifying Grace. Sanctifying Grace is The Grace of the Grown up Christian – The Grace of Royal Sons and Daughters of Gods. We need all the grace we can get and our brothers and sisters royals around us need all the grace they can get also.

5. Look around you. You are among royalty. Pretty cool, uh. As God's children, we are entitled to all the rights and privileges of the Kingdom of God. We have 24-7 access to the Kings of Kings, the Prince of Peace. We can call out to God the Father as Jesus did on the cross: Abba, Abba. In our regular English: Abba is like calling out Daddy!! We have Hope of a future, Comfort when we feel we cannot be comforted, Joy that springs like an endless fountain, the opportunity to point the way to the Kingdom through our humble service. We are the sons and daughters of God through Grace – God's Riches At Christ's Expense. We are Royal Heirs through the transforming sacrifice of Christ.