

In the Name of the Father, of the Son and of the Holy Spirit. Amen.

“So through God you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son then an heir.” (Galatians 4:7)

These words of St. Paul, which we heard in today’s scriptural reading, refer to the fact that a true Christian need no longer be bound by the limitations of ancient Hebraic law. God through His mercy liberated mankind from the bondage of slavery—that is slavery to the law.

By sending the Spirit of His Son into the hearts of men, God set a new kind of a relationship between man and God, namely that between a son and a father.

One of the major factors in our faith is this change we experience as believers. As we turn to God in faith and establish a spiritual contact with our Creator, a change takes place within us. The Spirit of God cleanses us of all the burden of sins and we find ourselves in a state of relief. This state may be compared to one frequently experienced by people who have gotten rid of burdens pressing over their souls and minds. Similarly, one may also consider the relief enemies feel after being reconciled with one another, or the joy any one of us may experience after a

quarrel with a close friend has been mitigated. Very often the emerging new relationship has a nobler dimension than the previous one.

Faith in God leads us through a very fruitful path. As we take an action to turn to God, God does not remain passive toward us. He sends His Spirit into our hearts in response and as a positive reaction to our faith. Our faith prompts us to follow the example of Christ and offer our mortal selves as a sacrifice or a gift to God. Without God’s interference we are no better than slaves of our bodily and emotional needs. But the Divine interference, namely the coming of the Spirit of His Son into our hearts gives a new dimension to our humble earthly structure.

Suddenly we rise from a mortal state to the honorable position of sonship of God and become heirs to the kingdom of God.

As Armenian Christians our fathers realized well the truth of St. Paul’s words. For centuries they lived under oppression and were the slaves of foreign overlords, but they understood well that slavery of that nature was only temporary. Consequently they paid greater attention to liberating their souls from the snares of slavery that could keep them in fetters for eternity. They brought their faith to the new world and transmitted it to us so that we would also receive the grace of God and become heirs to our heavenly father’s inheritance.

As the heirs of such a legacy we have no possible choice nor could afford turning away from God. St. Paul states: "but now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known by God, how can you turn back again to the weak and beggarly elemental spirits, whose slaves you want to be one more?" These "beggarly elemental spirits" affecting us these days are attitudes such as apathy, lack of faith, laziness in tending to our spiritual needs and other similar tendencies.

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We must attentively hearken to St. Paul's words and not forsake our inheritance. The opportunity to rise and reach the level of dignity where humanity and divinity meet must not be abandoned. I pray that we all grow strong in our faith and become true children of God. Amen.

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