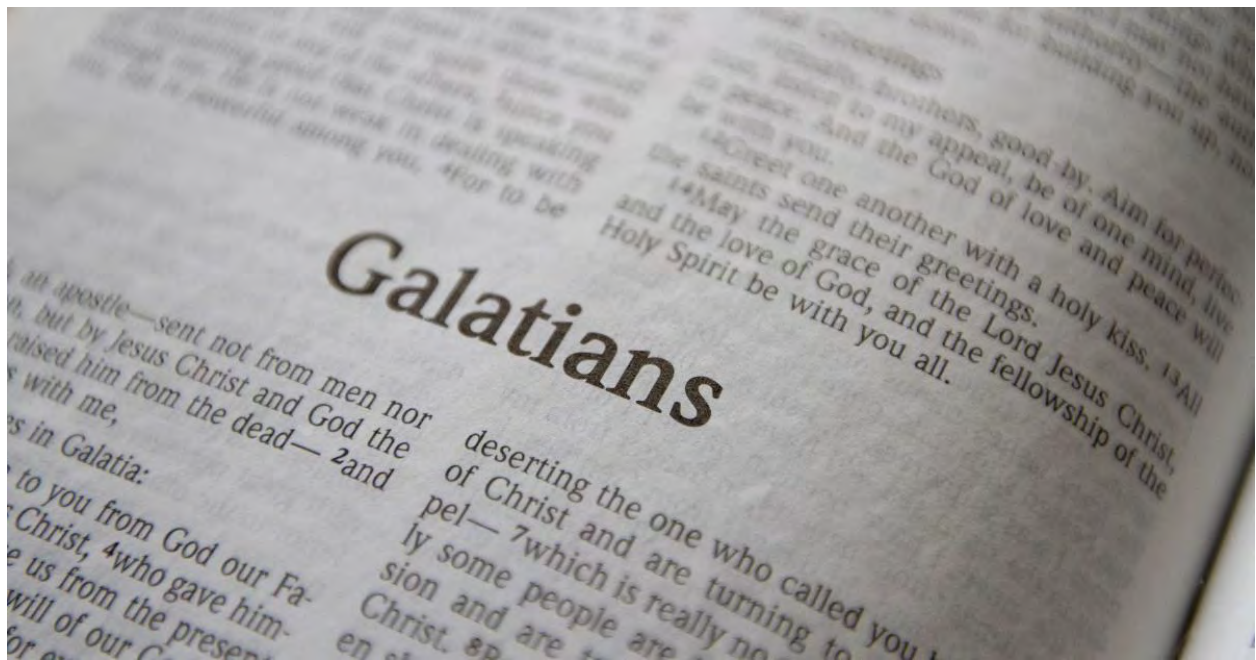


FAITH ALONE

GALATIANS 3



T. M. AND SUSIE MOORE

A Scriptorium Study from The Fellowship of Ailbe

Galatians 3

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Galatians 3: Introduction

We believe Jesus fulfilled the Law on our behalf. We believe that He died to bear God's wrath against our sin. We believe that, because He was righteous, death—the wages of sin—had no hold on Him, and He simply took back His life.

We believe that, in Jesus, in His life, death, and resurrection, we who believe are justified before God. Now Christ lives in us to empower us unto obedience and the pleasure of the Lord.

Justification is by faith alone, through the grace of God alone, and unto the glory of the Lord alone.

This is what the Galatians were beginning to lose sight of, and they were “foolish” (vv. 1, 3) for so doing.

We hope you find this study of the book of Galatians to provide abundant stimulation for your walk with and work for the Lord.

For His glory and praise!

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1 To Obey the Truth

Pray Psalm 25.4-6.

Show me Your ways, O LORD;

Teach me Your paths.

Lead me in Your truth and teach me,

For You *are* the God of my salvation;

On You I wait all the day.

Remember, O LORD, Your tender mercies and Your lovingkindnesses,

For they *are* from of old.

Sing Psalm 25.4-6.

(Festal Song: [Rise Up, O Men of God](#))

Make me to know Your ways, teach me Your paths, O LORD!

My Savior, all day long I wait and seek You in Your Word.

Remember mercy, LORD, and steadfast love to me!

But all my sins before You let them not remembered be!

Read and meditate on Galatians 2.1-3.

Preparation

1. Why did Paul go to Jerusalem? Who was with him?

2. How long into his ministry was he before he did this?

Meditation

Paul had been to Jerusalem once already, three years after his conversion (1.18), when Peter and James confirmed his faith and preaching. Though Paul can sometimes seem pretty sure of himself and without need of anyone to tell him what's what, we note that, from the beginning of his walk with the Lord he submitted to others who knew and loved Jesus as he did.

Fourteen years after that first visit, Paul returned. By now he had been preaching among Jews and Gentiles in southern Asia Minor (Acts 13, 14). False teachers from a sect of Jewish believers followed him around and tried to convert the new believers to Judaism by insisting that circumcision was as important as faith in being saved. That is, one could only be saved by faith plus works, faith in Jesus and the work of being circumcised.

Paul and Barnabas disputed this, of course, and they decided to take the matter to the apostles and elders in Jerusalem for an authoritative ruling (Acts 15). Initially, Paul met with a small gathering of faithful saints, to make sure he was right about what he was preaching (Gal. 2.2). Titus, a Greek was with him and Barnabas, and the Judaizers, true to their false view, insisted that he be circumcised. Paul refused. The matter was then taken into the broader arena of elders and apostles for debate. Paul's side prevailed.

Paul was certain the Gospel he was preaching was the one Jesus had taught him personally. Just so,

we can be certain that the Word of God, through which Jesus teaches us, is reliable, true, and indispensable for sanctification and good works (Jn. 17.17; 2 Tim. 3.15-17). But even Paul checked his teaching with those who were in Christ before Him. We should do the same. The treasury of Scripture and of orthodox Christian teaching—samples of which we provide for you each day—are both important in our walk with the Lord. The Spirit uses both these checkpoints to keep us from drifting—like the Galatians were—from the truth.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

What are our modern-day litmus tests for Christianity?

What is it that divides believers today?

What extra *Buy one Get one free* notion are we adding to the Gospel?

Is it baptism? You know, were you sprinkled or dunked?

How about communion? Is there a set age-limit before a baptized believer is eligible?

How about your beliefs on the Second Coming of Christ? Do you think we'll all be stamped with 666 and mayhem will reign for a thousand years, or is Jesus coming back with a shout very soon?

What about skirt length? Above or below the knee?

Or here's a zinger, what about the use of percussion whilst singing?

Really, there are so many "circumcision choices" for us one hardly knows where to begin.

All this without even adding in the questionable use of tobacco, alcohol, or playing cards.

When we investigate the perfect Law of God, we do not see one mention of any of the above topics (Ex. 20.1-17). Whole heart and life love for God, and then our fellowman, is what the Law includes.

And the glorious Gospel is not fueled or compelled by anything other than Jesus' life, death, resurrection, and His current reigning Kingship over us. "Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved" (Acts 4.12). "I AM the way, the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through Me" (Jn. 14.6).

How do we humans manage to mess up and obfuscate a Truth so plain, clear, and beautiful? "Christ Jesus, being in the form of God...made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men...being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross. Therefore God also has highly exalted Him and given Him the Name which is above every Name, that at the Name of Jesus every knee should bow, of those in heaven, and of those on earth, and of those under the earth, and that every tongue should confess that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father" (Phil. 2.5-11).

Circumcision, and all its modern-day equivalents, are not mentioned. Only Jesus.

His love. His beauty. His courage. His gift. His power. His majesty. His glory. His goodness. Only Jesus.

He is the only way to salvation. He is the only reason for our righteousness.

We cannot add any behaviors to get saved. We cannot add any manmade assets to enhance our sanctification.

We can only trust and obey.

There is enough that we are wholeheartedly supposed to do (Eph. 2.8-10; Jn. 14.15; Ex. 20.1-17) that we need not add on any ungodly encumbrances—extra-curricular rules—that divide the Body

of Christ or add burdens that do not need to be carried by God's children (Matt. 23.4, 23).

If there is any place for circumcision, it is this: "And the LORD your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul that you may live" (Deut. 30.6).

Please check this teaching by the Scriptures Old and New: they are an accessible Checkpoint, ready for you to delve into—the "Word of God, through which Jesus teaches us, is reliable, true, and indispensable for sanctification and good works."

Reflection

1. What is the Gospel, as you would share it with a non-Christian friend?
2. When we say that salvation, forgiveness, and eternal life are all of grace, what are we saying about works?
3. Good works of various kinds have a place in the Gospel, but where?

Observe the apostle's faithfulness in giving a full account of the doctrine he had preached among the Gentiles, and was still resolved to preach, that of Christianity, free from all mixture of Judaism. Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 2.1-10*

Pray Psalm 25.8-15.

Thank the Lord for daily teaching you from His Word and for those faithful friends and teachers who have helped you along the way in your walk with and work for the Lord.

Sing Psalm 25.8-15

(Festal Song: [*Rise Up, O Men of God*](#))

Upright and good are You, You lead us in Your way.
The humble You instruct in truth and guide him day by day.

The paths of God are all of love and faithfulness.
All they who keep His covenant the LORD will surely bless.

For Your sake, LORD, forgive. All they who fear You, LORD,
shall know Your blessings day by day and follow in Your Word.

Your friends are they who fear and seek Your holy face;
Your covenant with them You share and save them by Your grace.

2 Children of Abraham

Pray Psalm 105.3-7.

Glory in His holy name;
Let the hearts of those rejoice who seek the LORD!
Seek the LORD and His strength;
Seek His face evermore!
Remember His marvelous works which He has done,
His wonders, and the judgments of His mouth,
O seed of Abraham His servant,
You children of Jacob, His chosen ones!
He is the LORD our God;
His judgments are in all the earth.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

Read Galatians 3.1-9; meditate on verses 5-9.

Preparation

1. How are we saved and declared righteous before God?
2. Who are the true and blessed children of Abraham?

Meditation

The Judaizers used a powerful argument in pushing their cause: Do you want to be a child of Abraham our father? Then, like him, you must be circumcised.

All Jews revered Abraham, as we see in the gospels. Gentiles would undoubtedly have picked up on the special place of physical descent from Abraham that marked the Jews as a distinct people. Believing Gentiles would have understood that they were, in a certain way, part of a long tradition of the people of God. Thus, many would have been swayed by the argument that circumcision is required for all the true children of Abraham.

Paul says, “Nope.” Abraham believed God and His promises *before* he was circumcised. So it was believing that mattered for Abraham to be accounted righteous before God. And believing is what God insists on for all who would be Abraham’s true children and His.

God knew that He would justify Gentiles as early as when He spoke His promises to Abram (Gen. 12.1-3). But He said nothing about circumcision; He only required faith in His Word. The blessing of the Gospel reaches and spreads through the nations by the grace of God, lived and proclaimed by

the people of God, the true children of Abraham. God will give His Spirit to whomever He will, that they, too, may believe, be born again, and be adopted into the family of Abraham and God.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

God, Who supplies the Spirit to us, and works miracles among us (Gal. 3.5), requires one thing from us:

That we believe in Him and His plan of salvation for us: His only begotten Son's life, death, resurrection, and ascension—Jesus. Only Jesus.

Belief precedes everything.

“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1.1).

“For God so loved the world [He created] that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3.16).

“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast” (Eph. 2.8, 9).

“Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved” (Acts 4.12).

“For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 6.23).

“Every word of God is pure; He is a shield to those who put their trust in Him.

Do not add to His words, lest He rebuke you, and you be found a liar” (Prov. 30.5, 6).

Belief precedes everything; and grace precedes belief.

These truths we believe, and we believe them unto salvation.

To add circumcision, keeping the Law, or any other traditions of man to the amazing, merciful, gracious, gift of God's salvation plan is not only unnecessary, but it is wrong. And not only wrong; but self-defeating and stupid.

Who can keep the Law perfectly? Well, no one can. So why pretend otherwise?

Could it be that if we receive this gracious gift of salvation, we have an inkling that an obligation to live in a new Kingdom, under new guidelines, under new leadership—that of King Jesus—is required? And that might demand changes?

Or maybe we just cannot fathom that kind of LOVE?

But that LOVE is just as real as the Creation and all the other marvelous things that God has done.

It is a “no strings attached” gift.

It is only after we accept and unwrap the gift and put it on, that we joyously bear our light yoke and easy burden with our gentle and loving Savior, Jesus Christ (Matt. 11.28-30). “The Scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith” (Gal. 3.8) is a truth worth believing.

Reflection

1. What do we mean by “faith”? That is, what is necessary for true belief to be present in someone?

2. Why are faith and obedience *always* connected? Can we have faith without obedience? Can we have true obedience apart from faith? Explain.

3. How does grace make faith and obedience possible in us?

[If] Abraham was justified by faith those who wish to be his children must likewise abide firmly by faith. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 3.7*

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

Thank God for His faithfulness—to His covenant and promises—and for the grace by which He has saved you through faith in Jesus. Pray for grace, strength, and wisdom to live as a true child of Abraham today.

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11, 45.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

3 Redeemed from the Curse

Pray Psalm 2.7-9.

“I will declare the decree:
The LORD has said to Me,
‘You are My Son,
Today I have begotten You.
Ask of Me, and I will give You
The nations for Your inheritance,
And the ends of the earth for Your possession.
You shall break them with a rod of iron;
You shall dash them to pieces like a potter’s vessel.”

Sing Psalm 2.7-9.

(Agincourt: [*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*](#))

I will declare the LORD’s decree. He said, “My Son I have begotten Thee.
Ask Me, and I will give every land for You to rule as I have planned.”

Read Galatians 3.1-14; meditate on verses 10-14.

Preparation

1. From what has Jesus redeemed us?
2. Who remains under that condition?

Meditation

A curse remains for all who continue under the Law as breakers of that Law. This includes all who insist that they are justified before God by keeping the Law. We are justified by grace through faith in Jesus. No one is justified before God by keeping the Law of God or any law. A curse abides on all who believe and teach as much.

Jesus redeems us from the curse by becoming a curse for us. He took the penalty for our sins upon Himself, though He deserved no such thing. He bore the curse of the “tree” so that we could be redeemed from it and know the promised blessings of God by grace through faith. The Spirit of God comes with new and eternal life to all who believe in Jesus, not to those who are by any means trying to earn salvation—for they do “not [and cannot] continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.”

And that curse is an eternal—a forever—curse. We have our own false teachers today, some of whom teach a doctrine which goes by various names, such as “Christian Universalism.” This doctrine teaches that the love of God is so great that ultimately, He will forgive everyone “through Jesus.” No one will be cursed forever. To insist that some will be forever condemned is to make God monstrously evil.

Even a casual look at the psalms—one book of Scripture only—reveals the falsity of this view. God reigns *forever* (Ps. 45.6), and He gives eternal life—life *forever*—to all His redeemed saints (Pss. 21.4;

37.28). Conversely, all who continue in wickedness—who do not continue in all the works of the Law and who reject the offer of salvation by faith—are condemned and cursed *forever* (Pss. 9.5; 52.5; 92.7). It's a tragedy and a mystery why this must be so, but it is, for this is what the Scriptures teach.

They live forever who have received the Spirit of God, believe in Jesus and repent of their sins, and are working out their salvation in fear and trembling.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

We receive the blessing promised to Abraham in Christ Jesus and, we receive the promise of the Holy Spirit through faith in Christ Jesus (Gal. 3.14).

“He who is not with Me is against Me, and he who does not gather with Me scatters abroad. Therefore I say to you, every sin and blasphemy will be forgiven men, but the blasphemy against the Spirit will not be forgiven men. Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man, it will be forgiven him; but whoever speaks against the Holy Spirit, it will not be forgiven him, either in this age or in the age to come” (Matt. 12.30-32).

Either we believe the promise given to Abraham about the coming Savior for the Jews and Gentiles, or we don't. There are consequences to each choice: one good and the other not.

Jesus was telling the Pharisees, who loved nothing better than to obfuscate the Truth, that “grace comes by hearing and hearing by the Word of God” (Rom. 10.17). And that He is the Word of God.

But Jesus was also telling them that they could be forgiven for their harsh words against Him before He was glorified; but afterward, all bets were off. Because to blaspheme the Holy Spirit, sent after Jesus' ascension, is to not believe in the risen Jesus, His work of redemption, His victory over death, and His burdensome bearing of the curse of the Law for the whole world (Jn. 3.16). Blaspheme that, and you have negated God's plan of salvation, and refused the gift of grace through faith offered to His enemies—namely every person ever born (Rom. 5.8).

“Beware, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of unbelief in departing from the living God...” (Heb. 3.12).

“Who is a liar but he who denies that Jesus is the Christ?

He is antichrist who denies the Father and the Son.

Whoever denies the Son does not have the Father either;

he who acknowledges the Son has the Father also” (1 Jn. 2.22, 23).

“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them” (Deut. 27.26).

(Now the “law” that we must confirm is belief in Jesus by grace through faith).

“If anyone does not love the Lord Jesus Christ, let him be accursed” (1 Cor. 16.22).

“Oh, love the LORD, all you His saints!” (Ps. 31.23).

“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us...” (Gal. 3.13).

“Greater love has no one than this, than to lay down one's life for his friends.

You are My friends if you do whatever I command you” (Jn. 15.13, 14).

“He took the penalty for our sins upon Himself, though He deserved no such thing.”

“Bless the LORD, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless His holy Name!
Bless the LORD, O my soul, and forget not all His benefits:
Who forgives all your iniquities...” (Ps. 103.1-3).

Redeemed from the curse.

Reflection

1. What is “the curse” from which believers have been redeemed?
2. Should mention of that curse be included in our presentation of the Gospel? Explain.
3. How does it affect you, knowing that Jesus has redeemed you from the curse?

Though deliverance is not to be expected from the law, there is a way open to escape the curse, and regain the favor of God, namely, through faith in Christ. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law; being made sin, or a sin-offering, for us, he was made a curse for us; not separated from God, but laid for a time under the Divine punishment.
Matthew Henry (1662-1714), *Commentary on Galatians 3.6-14*

Pray Psalm 2.10-12.

Pray that God will bring revival and renewal to His Church and a great awakening to faith in Jesus and redemption from the curse of the Law to the nations of the world.

Sing Psalm 2.10-12

(Agincourt: [*O Love, How Deep, How Broad, How High*](#))

Be wise, O kings, O judges, hear, and tremble with joy, serve the LORD with fear.
Embrace the Son, keep His wrath at bay, or you shall perish in the way.

His wrath is kindled like a flame at all who refuse to bow to His Name.

Beware His anger and judgment grim: How blessed are all who trust in Him!

4 Law and Promise

Pray Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

Oh, give thanks to the LORD!
Call upon His name;
Make known His deeds among the peoples!
Sing to Him, sing psalms to Him;
Talk of all His wondrous works...
He remembers His covenant forever,
The word *which* He commanded, for a thousand generations,
The covenant which He made with Abraham,
And His oath to Isaac,
And confirmed it to Jacob for a statute,
To Israel *as* an everlasting covenant,
Saying, “To you I will give the land of Canaan
As the allotment of your inheritance...”

Sing Psalm 105.1, 2, 8-11.

(Warrington: [*Give to Our God Immortal Praise*](#))

Give thanks unto the LORD Most High; call on His Name, before Him cry!
Make known His deeds in every land; sing praise for all the works of His hand.

He will His covenant faithfully guard—His oath, the promise of His Word.
That which He to our fathers swore, He will perform forevermore!

Read Galatians 3.1-18; meditate on verses 15-18.

Preparation

1. To Whom ultimately did God make promises?
2. Does the Law nullify the promises of God?

Meditation

God has not set aside the promise of life—for Jews and Gentiles alike—which God gave to Abraham. The giving of the Law, 430 years after the promise to Abraham, was not a *different* covenant but an expansion and enrichment of the *existing* covenant. It provided the means (Law) for us to gain the promises—blessed to be a blessing. God always keeps His Word, whether to Abraham or Moses or you and me.

Because, as Paul deftly pointed out, that promise, though it reaches to and embraces God’s chosen people from every nation, is ultimately not *to* them (us). Ultimately, God’s promise of a people who are blessed and a blessing to the world was made *to His Son, Who is Jesus Christ*. Paul used a single point of grammar to draw this to our attention, Moses’ use of the singular “Seed” instead of the plural (“All Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable...” 2 Tim. 3.16).

So does it make sense that God would ever set aside, ever not fulfill, or ever ignore promises made

to His own Son? No. Not at all. All the promises of God are Yes! and Amen! in Jesus Christ (2 Cor. 1.20).

And all the Law of God is fulfilled in Him as well (Matt. 5.17-19). The full realization of everything God has promised for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit is to be enjoyed in Jesus. And the holiness for which God has separated us as saints unto Himself will also be realized in Him.

And He lives in us!

The Law does not set aside the promises. It *enriches* the promises, makes them more desirable, puts them more within our reach, and ultimately, as a component of God's covenant, points beyond itself to our Lord Jesus Christ, Who has redeemed us from the curse of sin and sent His Spirit to dwell in our hearts by faith.

Here is a great mystery. But also, truth to be known and enjoyed.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

“For unto us a Child is born, unto us a Son is given...” (Is. 9.6).

“Then the angel said to them,
‘Do not be afraid, for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy which will be to all people. For there is born to you this day in the city of David a Savior, Who is Christ the Lord’” (Lk. 2.10, 11).

“Therefore it is of faith
that it might be according to grace,
so that the promise might be sure to all the seed,
not only to those who are of the law,
but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham,
who is the father of us all
(as it is written, ‘I have made you a father of many nations’)
in the presence of Him Whom he believed—God,
Who gives life to the dead
and calls those things which do not exist as though they did;
who, contrary to hope, in hope believed, so that
he became the father of many nations,
according to what was spoken, ‘So shall your descendants be’ (Rom. 4.16-18).

In earthly terms a promise is defined as a declaration that one will do or refrain from doing something specified; and/or, a legally binding declaration that gives the person to whom it is made a right to expect or to claim the performance or forbearance of a specified act. To that definition, add all the heavenly nuances and inclusions of promises coming directly from God, and we have the Word Promise, loaded with the weight of glory.

“Thus God, determining to show more abundantly to the heirs of promise the immutability of His counsel, confirmed it by an oath, that by two immutable things, in which it is impossible for God to lie, we might have strong consolation, who have fled for refuge to lay hold of the hope set before us. This hope we have as an anchor of the soul, both sure and steadfast...even Jesus...the Mediator of the new covenant...and a kingdom which cannot be shaken...” (Heb. 6.17-20; 12.24, 28).

“Exceedingly great and precious promises have been given *to us...*” (2 Pet. 1.4), all of which will be performed by God *for us*, as He will perfect that which *concerns us* (Ps. 138.8) in His time and in His way.

“The full realization of everything God has promised for righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Spirit is to be enjoyed in Jesus. And the holiness for which God has separated us as saints unto Himself will also be realized in Him.”

Only Jesus.

Reflection

1. “[W]e have the Word Promise, loaded with the weight of glory.” What does this mean for you?
2. Keeping the Law is the way into a fuller realization of the promises. Why is this *not* salvation by works?
3. Whom will you encourage in the Word Promise: Jesus?

[I]f you do not understand that the promise is free, there will be no force in the statement; for the law and the promise are not at variance but on this single point, that the law justifies a man by the merit of works, and the promise bestows righteousness freely. This is made abundantly clear when he calls it a covenant founded on Christ. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 3.17

Pray Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

Seek the Lord and His Presence and strength for the work ahead of you today. Rejoice in His steadfast love and faithfulness, and resolve to live toward His promises and walk within His Law always.

Sing Psalm 105.3-7, 45.

(Warrington: [Give to Our God Immortal Praise](#))

Glory in God, rejoice in heart, all you who seek His holy part.
Him and His strength and Presence seek; His works proclaim, His judgments speak.

You holy children of Abraham, you chosen ones of Jacob, stand!
He is our LORD, of wondrous worth; His judgments are in all the earth.

So let us all in our Savior confide, and in His holy Law abide.
Let us observe His glorious Word, and praise our sovereign, faithful LORD!

5 Law as Tutor

Opening Prayer: Psalm 119.25-27.

My soul clings to the dust;
Revive me according to Your word.
I have declared my ways, and You answered me;
Teach me Your statutes.
Make me understand the way of Your precepts;
So shall I meditate on Your wonderful works.

Sing Psalm 119.25-27.

(Festal Song: [Rise Up, O Men of God](#))

My soul clings to the dust; revive me by Your Word!
My ways I have declared to You; teach me Your statutes, LORD!

Make me to understand Your precepts and Your ways,
as on Your works I meditate with wonder and with praise!

Read Galatians 3.1-25; meditate on verses 19-25.

Preparation

1. How did Paul refer to the Law?
2. How does the Law function in this role?

Meditation

The Law of God did not negate the promises of God's covenant (v. 21). Instead, it enriched the covenant by giving us more specific guidance in how to lay hold on the promises. Because the people were all sinners—just as we are—the Law was added to God's covenant to show them (and us) how to love Him and our neighbors (v. 19). We don't have to rely on our own best guesses about how to fulfill this calling.

But, again because they were (and we are) sinners, they (and we) could not keep the Law. But the Law remains, and God's people kept trying to keep it throughout the Old Testament, which they should have done. But not to earn their salvation; rather, to discover that they can't save themselves and they need God to come to their aid in this. They still wanted God's promises, but they were learning from God's Law that they couldn't gain the promises on their own. Only when the promised Seed (Gen. 3.15) should come would the promises come to them in human form. And the Law, their faithful tutor, kept pointing them to that day and to the coming Mediator, our Lord Jesus Christ.

Like the people of God of old, we can't be made righteous by the Law. The Law shows us our sin at the same time it lights the path to the promise. The Law of God is written on the hearts of all people, even those who do not believe (Rom. 2.14, 15). Thus it serves as a "guard" to human morality, though most people do not acknowledge this (v. 23).

When Jesus came and fulfilled the Law (Matt. 5.17-19) the way into God's promises was finally lighted for all who will believe. The Law points us to Jesus. Believing in Him, we embrace Him as the Way, and we learn that Jesus' way is to follow the Law (1 Jn. 2.1-6), not to *earn* righteousness but to *express* it, the righteousness we have in Jesus and which the Spirit works out in us. As we do, He Who *is* the Promise of God transforms us and bears witness through us, so that we are filled with gratitude, wonder, and joy.

The Law is thus no longer our tutor. Jesus is (Matt. 11.28-30). And Jesus teaches us to love God and our neighbors according to the glorious precepts and principles of His Law (Matt. 22.34-40).

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

"Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith...no longer under a tutor" (Gal. 3.24, 25).

Now the Tutor, Who kept the Law perfectly, is walking beside us to guide us into all Truth. We do not fear Him as we would a tutor with a ruler whacking our knuckles for stupidity; but we fear Him because He is the Royal King, the Ruler, the Word Promise, the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End (Ps. 2.12). "All things were made through Him, and without Him nothing was made that was made" (Jn. 1.3).

Jesus loves the Law and wants us to live within its parameters:

"Stay always within the boundaries where God's love can reach and bless you" (Jude 1.21TLB).

"If you love Me, keep My commandments" (Jn. 14.15).

"You are My friends if you do whatever I command you" (Jn. 15.14).

"You shall love the LORD your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind."

This is the first and great commandment. And the second is like it: 'You shall love your neighbor as yourself.' On these two commandments hang all the Law and the Prophets" (Matt. 22.37-40).

"I AM the LORD your God...you shall have no other gods before Me.

You shall not make for yourselves a carved image...you shall not bow down to them nor serve them.

You shall not take the Name of the LORD your God in vain.

Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.

Honor your father and your mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness.

You shall not covet" (Ex. 20. 1-17).

We obviously cannot keep this Law perfectly, especially since Jesus clarified that it is equally wrong to commit these sins in our hearts and minds (Matt. 5.21-34).

But we are meant to live within the Law through the power of the Holy Spirit because as Jesus said: "Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill" (Matt. 5.17). And in this same discourse to the multitudes, He said: "For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. 5.20). And how best to be righteous? Keep the Law. It is the way The Creator of the heavens and the earth proclaimed that life is best lived. The instruction

manual for making the least mess of it.

“The Law points us to Jesus. Believing in Him, we embrace Him as the Way, and we learn that Jesus’ way is to follow the Law” (1 Jn. 2.1-6). The law as tutor brought us to Christ; now we serve the Tutor who is Christ—in His way, according to His plan, by His protective and loving Law.

“Oh, how I love Your law!” (Ps. 119.97).

Reflection

1. In what ways has the Law of God been a tutor, leading you to Jesus?
2. How does Jesus, as Your Tutor, help you to know the value of the Law of God?
3. How does keeping the Law, following the example of your Tutor, help you in realizing the promises of God which are all Yes! and Amen! in Jesus?

The grammarian, when he has trained a boy, delivers him into the hands of another, who conducts him through the higher branches of a finished education. In like manner, the law was the grammar of theology, which, after carrying its scholars a short way, handed them over to faith to be completed. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 3.24

Pray Psalm 119.28-32.

Jesus is the Way, the Truth, and the Life. Thank the Lord that His Word leads you daily to Jesus. Call on Him to help you run the course of obedience to God’s Word.

Sing Psalm 119.28-32.

(Festal Song: [*Rise Up, O Men of God*](#))

My soul weighs down with woe, I need Your strength, O LORD!
Remove from me all lying ways; grant me Your holy Word!

I choose the way of truth; Your judgments I proclaim.
Your testimonies I embrace, LORD, put me not to shame!

Command my course, O LORD; Your gracious truth impart.
I cling to You and know You will enlarge my seeking heart.

6 One in Christ

Opening Prayer: Psalm 133.1-3

Behold, how good and how pleasant *it is*
For brethren to dwell together in unity!
It is like the precious oil upon the head,
Running down on the beard,
The beard of Aaron,
Running down on the edge of his garments.
It is like the dew of Hermon,
Descending upon the mountains of Zion;
For there the LORD commanded the blessing—
Life forevermore.

Sing Psalm 133.1-3

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: [*Children of the Heavenly Father*](#))

O behold, how sweet, how pleasant, when the brethren dwell together;
all in unity abiding find God's blessing there presiding.

Read Galatians 3.1-26; meditate on verses 26-29.

Preparation

1. What do we become as believers in Jesus?
2. Of what are we heirs?

Meditation

Because salvation is by grace through faith, resulting in our ingrafting to the Body of Christ, all who believe become members of that Body and are one together in Him. By adoption, we are children of God (v. 26) and heirs of the covenant promise (v. 29), which finds its fulfillment in Jesus.

Baptism is an important sacrament for the life of faith, for by it believers, and children of believers, put on the Lord Jesus Christ (v. 27). Christ becomes our new identity, orientation, and goal. He lives in all who believe that He might make us more like Him day by day (2 Cor. 3.12-18).

Baptism is not a work, like the Judaizers wanted circumcision to be, but a seal, an initial proof of our belonging to Jesus. Indeed, this is what God intended in giving circumcision to Abraham. Abraham circumcised Isaac, not to make him a child of God in His covenant but because he already was one. Isaac would grow up to confirm that as an adult, but he would not need to be circumcised again at that time. In the Gospel, all who believe in Jesus—Jews and Gentiles alike—are Abraham's children and are baptized into Christ. Baptism is not a guarantee of faith, but a sign and seal of it for all who believe.

In Christ we are all members of His Body without regard to our natural differences (v. 28). Those differences do not disappear once we become Christians; nor are they rendered insignificant. Rather, they find their greatest fulfillment in the context of our being members of the Body of Christ, one

with one another in Him.

Being in Christ Jesus changes everything. All that we are and do become means whereby we declare to the world that we are children of God and members of the Body of Christ.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

Human beings clearly are not bugs; but God has set forth in His creation an example of change—caterpillar to butterfly—that He foresees happening to us. The metamorphosis—transitional change—happens within every believer’s heart.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new” (2 Cor. 5.17).

God wants us to see that new ideas are afoot through salvation. There is no hierarchy in Christendom—only equal people serving the living God. There is neither: Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female (Gal. 3.28). We are all one in Christ Jesus. “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, in whom the whole building, being fitted together grows into a holy temple in the Lord, in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit” (Eph. 2.19-22).

Without getting too graphic, circumcision was obviously a sign given only to men; but now that we are “all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus” (Gal. 3.26) women and men, without any divisive encumbrances, are both offered the gift of salvation by grace through faith, without any outward signs being necessary to belong in the family of God. Equal entrance—equal judgment. All the same in God’s eyes.

The metamorphosis continues with our heavenly bodies: for “in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels of God in heaven” (Matt. 22.30). And as Luke remembers Jesus’ statement to the Pharisees regarding our risen bodies: “The sons of this age marry and are given in marriage. But those who are counted worthy to attain that age, and the resurrection from the dead, neither marry nor are given in marriage; nor can they die anymore, for they are equal to the angels and are sons of God, being sons of the resurrection” (Lk. 20.34-36).

How glorious to think that all the trappings of humanity will one day be expunged, and we will be free from these concerns, rejoicing in glorified bodies. But for now, God encourages us to think of ourselves as transformed and already overcomers.

We can free ourselves from the disabling thoughts that trip our minds up on things that are not uplifting. He wants us to dwell with Him now, knowing that we are already “seated” with Him in the heavenly places (Eph. 2.6), with a new perspective on life. And seated there we are encouraged to dwell on: “whatever things are true, whatever things are noble, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there is any virtue and if there is anything praiseworthy—meditate on these things” (Phil. 4.8).

The moment we “put on Christ” (Gal. 3.27) the metamorphosis began and will continue as we “work out [our] own salvation with fear and trembling” (Phil. 2.12). One—in Christ—until that Day

and beyond into eternity.

Reflection

1. In what sense is baptism a sign of our belonging to Jesus? How does it “seal” our faith in Him?
2. Is there a difference between thinking of ourselves as members of Christ’s Body and members of a local church? Explain.
3. According to John 17.21, why is it important that we pursue unity with our fellow believers? Which fellow believers?

The meaning is, that there is no distinction of persons here, and therefore it is of no consequence to what nation or condition any one may belong: nor is circumcision any more regarded than sex or civil rank. And why? Because Christ makes them all one. Whatever may have been their former differences, Christ alone is able to unite them all. John Calvin (1509-1564), Commentary on Galatians 3.28

Closing Prayer: Psalm 133.2, 3

Pray for unity in your church and for greater unity between the churches in your community.

Sing Psalm 133.2, 3

(Tryggare Kan Ingen Vara: [*Children of the Heavenly Father*](#))

Like the precious oil of blessing flowing down on Aaron’s vestment,
God’s anointing rests forever where His people dwell together.

Like the dew of Hermon’s fountain falling down on Zion’s mountain,
so the blessing of the Savior dwells where unity finds favor.

7 Faith Alone

Galatians 3 (7)

Opening Prayer: Psalm 116.7-9

Return to your rest, O my soul,
For the LORD has dealt bountifully with you.
For You have delivered my soul from death,
My eyes from tears,
And my feet from falling.
I will walk before the LORD
In the land of the living.

Sing Psalm 116.7-9

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise To God Who Reigns Above*](#))

Full well the LORD has dealt with me; my soul from death He delivered.
My weeping eyes, my stumbling feet, He has redeemed forever.
Forever I before His face shall walk with those who know His grace,
and dwell with them forever.

Read Galatians 3.1-29; meditate on verses 10-14.

Preparation

1. By what means are we justified before the Lord?
2. Why can we not be justified by our own works?

Meditation

To be “justified” before God is to be acknowledged by Him as just, that is, as blameless before His holy and righteous and good Law. It is not possible for anyone to be justified by keeping the Law for all of us have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God (Rom. 3.23). It doesn’t matter if you have only sinned one time in your life—which is impossible, of course. Break God’s Law in one point and you break it all.

If keeping the works of the Law is our preferred route to being justified before God, then we are on the path to being cursed (v. 10). Only Jesus has kept God’s Law perfectly; thus, He is able to redeem from the curse all who look to Him (vv. 13, 14). Nothing we might do will contribute to our being justified, because everything we do, because we are sinners, is tainted with lawlessness and sin. We deserve to be cursed and condemned; yet Jesus has taken that curse upon Himself. As Paul put it elsewhere, God made Jesus, Who never sinned, to become sin and cursed for us, that we might be justified and declared righteous before God through faith in Him (2 Cor. 5.21).

And we believe this. We believe Jesus fulfilled the Law on our behalf. We believe that He died to bear God’s wrath against our sin. We believe that, because He was righteous, death—the wages of sin—had no hold on Him, and He simply took back His life. We believe that, in Jesus, in His life, death, and resurrection, we who believe are justified before God. Now Christ lives in us to empower us unto obedience and the pleasure of the Lord.

This is what the Galatians were beginning to lose sight of, and they were “foolish” (vv. 1, 3) for so doing. Only a fool thinks he can save himself. The blessing of Abraham and the promise of God come to those who believe and who, believing, live all their life by and for Jesus and His glory (2.20, 21). Justification is by faith alone, through the grace of God alone, and unto the glory of the Lord alone.

Treasure Old and New: Matthew 13.52; Psalm 119.162

The people on the Titanic were a mix of folk from many different walks of life. Some were good, some bad, some rich, others not as well off; there was the captain of the vessel and all his assistants, there were those who cooked the meals and cleaned the cabins, those who swabbed the decks; but when that ship hit the iceberg everyone was in the same boat, as it were. They all, regardless of race, creed, or financial standing, needed a lifeboat.

The ship’s captain had received six unheeded warnings of sea ice. And of the 2,224 souls on board, 1,500 perished because the danger was real, and sadly, the lifeboats were few.

The wilderness wandering children of Israel sinned against the LORD. In fact, they “spoke against God and Moses... So the LORD sent fiery serpents among the people, and they bit the people; and many of the people of Israel died...the people came to Moses, and said, ‘We have sinned...pray that the LORD [will] take away the serpents from us’...so Moses prayed for the people. Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Make a fiery serpent, and set it on a pole; and it shall be that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, shall live.’ So Moses made a bronze serpent, and put it on a pole; and so it was, if a serpent had bitten anyone, when he looked at the bronze serpent, he lived” (Num. 21.1-9).

“And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life. For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life” (Jn. 3.14- 16).

All the people on earth are like those on the Titanic, or those wandering the wilderness being killed by snakes.

We come from all walks of life, in a beautiful array of colors and socio-economic status, who all desperately need a lifeboat or a bronze serpent, for “all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God” (Rom. 3.23).

A warning, hopefully better heeded, than by the captain of the Titanic.

God, in His vast, immeasurable, amazing grace and love gave us Jesus, in His perfection, to be our saving Bronze LifeBoat. All we need to do is jump in by faith alone and believe He will save us. And He will.

*I know not why God’s wondrous grace to me He hath made known,
Nor why, unworthy, Christ in love redeemed me for His own.
But “I know whom I have believed, and am persuaded that He is able
To keep that which I’ve committed unto Him against that day.”
(Daniel W. Whittle, 1883)*

Reflection

1. What was the situation in your life when you came to faith in Jesus? Were you in need of a LifeBoat?
2. Why is Jesus the Lifeboat *everybody* needs?
3. What is our role in making Jesus known to others?

The law justifies him who fulfills all its precepts, while faith justifies those who are destitute of the merit of works, and who rely on Christ alone. To be justified by our own merit, and to be justified by the grace of another, are two schemes which cannot be reconciled: one of them must be overturned by the other. John Calvin (1509-1564), *Commentary on Galatians 3.11*

Pray Psalm 116.1-3, 10-19.

Thank God for the mercy He has shown in saving you by grace through faith. Thank Him for hearing your prayers. Devote yourself to the Lord and His Word, and commit the day ahead to Him in all your ways.

Sing Psalm 116.1-3, 10-19

(Mit Freuden Zart: [*All Praise to God Who Reigns Above*](#))

I love the LORD because He hears my cries and pleas for mercy.
Because He bends to me His ear, my prayers shall ever thus be.
The snares of death encompassed me; hell's grip could not unloosened be;
distress and anguish pressed me.

Afflicted, I believe His Word, though lying men would undo me.
What shall I render to the LORD for all His blessings to me?
Salvation's cup I lift above and call upon the God of love
and pay my vows most truly.

How sweet to Him when saints depart—make me Your servant, Savior!
From sin You loosed my wand'ring heart; I praise Your Name forever!
On You I call, my vows to pay; here in Your Presence I would stay
Your praise to offer ever.

Galatians 3

Questions for Reflection or Discussion

1. Why can we not be justified by works? Are there any works we could do that would justify us before God?
2. Why is someone “foolish” who thinks they can be justified by works?
3. What has Jesus done to free us from the curse of the Law?
4. How does the Law help us come to Jesus? How does Jesus help us gain the promise and blessing of Abraham?
5. What’s the most important lesson you have learned from Galatians 3?

For Prayer:

The Fellowship of Ailbe

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