

**THE LETTER TO THE GALATIANS:  
KEY ISSUES ADDRESSED BY THE APOSTLE PAUL  
(Emphasis: How to Change to Be More Christ-like and Christ-centered)  
Equipping Hour at Saving Grace Bible Church, Osprey, FL  
(Lesson 4: 5/27/2018)**

**INTRODUCTION**

- We are continuing our journey through the Apostle Paul's Letter to the churches of Galatia -- in the cities of Derbe, Lystra, Pisidian Antioch (not Syria) and Iconium -- churches Paul and Barnabas planted (Acts 13-14.).

**PURPOSE OF OUR STUDY**

To equip you to understand and address the key issues raised by the Apostle Paul to the Galatian churches. Why? So you may live more Christ-like and evidence Christ-centeredness flowing from your life and heart. In doing so, you may be better equipped to be able to teach others and present every person complete in Christ (Colossians 1:28-29).

**REVIEW: HIGHLIGHTS FROM GALATIANS 2 (LESSON 3):**

Paul, the appointed Apostle to the Gentiles was under attack by the Judaizers. In the Galatian region they believed it was necessary to undermine, and if possible, to destroy his work. How did the Judaizers attempt to do this?

(1) They endeavored to depreciate Paul's apostolic position and set up the 12 Apostles as the real interpreters of Christ so as to discredit Paul's authority as a teacher of grace. and (2) they attempted to substitute a salvation-by-works system for the doctrine of pure grace which Paul preached/wrote about early in chapter 1.

In chapter 2, Paul defends the content of his message. Since you have the notes from last week and the recording is available on the SGBC website, I will limit the review of chapter 2's lesson to a few remarks:

- How Paul Contended for the Content of His Message (2:1-10).
- How Paul Confronted the Apostle Peter's Behavior at Antioch (2:11-14)
- How Paul Called Attention to Applicable Biblical Principles (2:15-21).

**BACKGROUND: Galatians 3**

In chapters 3-4, Paul defends the doctrine of justification by faith alone in Christ alone without works. This doctrine was against the Judaizers -- the works the Law performed by an individual gave acceptance with God..

**TODAY'S OUTLINE: Galatians 3**

- I. Paul Points to the Experience of the Galatian Believer's Faith (3:1-5)
- II. Paul Proposes that Faith is the Blessing of Abraham (3:6-9)
- III. Paul Provides Evidence that the Law Condemns Sinners (3:10-14)
- IV. Paul Proclaims the Promise of the New Covenant (3:15-18)
- V. Paul Pronounces the Purpose of the Law (3:19-22)
- VI. Paul Proves Justification through Faith in Christ (3:23-29)
- VII. Takeaways for Your Personal and Practical Application

**I. Paul Points to the Experience of the Galatian Believer's Faith (3:1-5)**

Verses 1-5: In these verses, Paul reminds the Galatian believers of their own life experience in the recent past. He does this by asking questions. Why is that important? Asking questions is a very effective way to learn where someone stands with respect to the truth. Read Proverbs 18:1, 3, 5, 17. So, Paul asked these Galatian believers, "How were you saved: by faith or by the works of the Law?" Soteriology is the doctrine of salvation; that man is justified only by faith in Jesus Christ without the works of the Law. The same doctrine was enlarged upon in Romans, only there Paul expressed the Divine side of its truth while here in

Galatians 3 he emphasized the human response. In Romans, Paul he taught that God justifies believers by imputing on each one's account a rightness or righteousness that satisfied His justice.

v 1: Recall that in 1:11, Paul referred to these professing believers – converts to Christ through his ministry (in Acts 13 and 14) -- as brethren. In this verse, however, he addresses them as Galatians, which was far less personal. He reprimands their behavior—acting/thinking foolishly. These are not mentally deficient people, but rather intelligent. In light of the truth of the gospel (salvation by grace through faith in Christ alone), their thinking was inconsistent, contradictory, and nonsensical; summed up in the word “foolish.” It expresses surprise mingled with indignation. Luke 24:25 -- how Jesus used the word foolish to rebuke the two disciples on the Road to Emmaus.

Bewitched. Paul uses this term likely because the Galatians believers had become fascinated by the teaching of and arguments presented by the Judaizers. They wooed them with specific details included in the first 5 books of the Hebrew Scriptures – the Pentateuch. Jesus Christ being publicly portrayed as crucified -- “placarded before them upon his Cross.” Portrayed used for posting public announcements or notices. This Paul did in his preaching among the Galatians; he placarded notice of the crucifixion of the Lord Jesus, which should have been enough to keep the eyes of the Galatians from wandering to the enticements of the Judaizers.

v 2: Paul's questions infer that it was evident to these Galatian Christians that they had received the Holy Spirit as a result of Paul's preaching and not the observance of circumcision or anything else. Recall Acts 13:13-16, 38-44.

Flesh here he refers to all that a person is as the product of natural generation apart from the morally transforming power of the Holy Spirit in regeneration.

v 4: This verse addresses the sufferings which the Galatian saints went through as a result of having received the Lord Jesus as Savior. The only record of any persecutions in the Galatian cities is in Acts 14:2, 5, 19, 22.

v 5: The word therefore continues the thought of vss. 2-3, which provides further emphasis. In v.2, Paul addressed the initial entrance of the Spirit into the lives of the Galatian believers at the moment of salvation – believing in the Lord Jesus. In verse 3, he refers to the sanctifying work of the Spirit in the believer's life; verse 5, the subject of the observable manifestations of the Spirit is introduced.

## **II. Paul Proposes Faith is the Blessing of Abraham (3:6-9)**

Verses 6-9: The second point is better adapted to refute the Judaizing teachers since Abraham was the founder of their faith. Remember Jesus' exchange with the Pharisees in John 8:13, 18-19, 39, and 52-59.

v. 6: Abraham clearly was justified (declared righteous) - righteousness imputed on his account – how? When God enabled him to believe – he trusted God; evident before he was circumcised. Abraham was justified by faith, not works. Therefore, the true children of Abraham are justified in the same way.

v. 7: It is those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. Salvation is appropriated by faith; and that faith is personal (not national, tribal, or corporate); internal, and spiritual (born from above – John 3), having nothing to do with ceremonies, rituals, observations, good works or external of any kind

v. 8: Thus God, foreseeing that He would justify the Gentiles by faith announced the gospel to Abraham, which message was to be received by faith. The good news announced to Abraham was that someday the Savior would arise out of his nation Israel, and that the Gentiles would be saved through Him.

v. 9: This is a definite statement of the proposition which Paul wishes to prove. The emphasis is that the believing ones are blessed with salvation, rather than those who depend upon good work.

### **III. Paul Provides Evidence that the Law Condemns Sinners (3:10-14)**

vss. 10-14: The Judaizers taught that the Law was a means of justification. Paul reminds them that the Law has a curse attached to it – the curse would come to anyone who breaks the Law, even one part of it (James 2:10). Thus, Paul shows that the Law is a means of condemnation, and that it is the Lord Jesus who rescues us from its condemnation through the blood of His Cross (3:10–14). So, what is the solution? The substitutionary death of Christ which was a propitiation took the curse of the Law and anyone who sincerely believes in Him and identifies with Him can be saved and avoid the curse of the Law.

v. 10: Deuteronomy 27:26.. Instead of being blessed by their act of putting themselves under the Law, if the Galatian believers were to follow the Judaizers, they would voluntarily be putting themselves under a curse.

v. 11: The words “by the Law” are in the Greek read “in Law,” which corresponds to “in the book of the Law” from Deut 27:26, quoted in v. 10. Thus, the person who does not continue in the sphere of the Law is under the curse. God the Father declares a believing sinner righteous on the basis of the fact that Christ has met the requirements of the Law which you broke and He Himself becomes our righteousness, per II Cor. 5:21.

v. 12: The statement, “The Law is not of faith” means that the two principles of Law and of faith as a means of justification (being declared righteous before God) for salvation (saved from eternal punishment) are mutually exclusive of one another. They are diametrically opposed to each other.

v. 13: The word redeemed is “to redeem from slavery.” It means “to buy up.” It is used frequently in the NT, with the idea that such deliverance involves cost of some kind, effort, suffering, or loss to the one who effects the deliverance. It conveys the figure of a ransom. Mankind needed a ransom, for the Law had left them prisoners under sentence of death.

v. 14: There are two purpose clauses in this verse:

(i) Christ became a curse for us in order that the blessing of Abraham, justification by faith might be given to both Jew and Gentile; and (ii) Christ became a curse for us order that the Holy Spirit, might be given to all mankind, which includes both Jews and Gentile (Joel 2:28-29). The Law, which was the barrier that separated Jew and Gentile, is done away in Christ. By its removal, the Gentiles are put on a common level with the Jew, and thus, united because both Jew and Gentile are recipients of salvation by faith and indwelt by the Holy Spirit through faith (Romans 8:9).

### **IV. Paul Proclaims the Promise of the New Covenant (3:15-18)**

v.15: Paul now presents an argument to show that the covenant God made with Abraham was still applicable, basing it upon the priority of the covenant and its irrevocable character.

v 16: The promises were made to Abraham and to his seed, Christ. But when Christ is seen as seed of Abraham here, all those saved by Christ or in Christ are included.

v 17: The words “What I am saying is this” or “This is what I mean” is a continuation of what he had already expressed in v. 16. Paul’s argument, therefore, is as follows: If a covenant once in force cannot be changed or rendered void by any subsequent action, God’s covenant with Abraham cannot be changed or rendered void by the subsequent Law.

v 18: Paul’s polemic here is that if the Law affects the promise at all, it renders it null and void. It cannot be added to it without destroying it. Salvation must rest either upon the promise or upon the Law.

The word granted is a specialized word denoting not merely a gift, but a gracious gift which is lavished via the spontaneous generosity of the giver's heart, with no strings tied to it.

#### **V. Paul Pronounces the Purpose of the Law (3:19-22)**

Paul begins this section with a very logical question that at this juncture both the Galatian believers and Judaizers would likely be following up with as the letter was read among them. If the Law was never given as a means whereby a sinner might be saved, why was it given in the first place, and for what purpose?

v. 19: So, Why, then, have the Law at all? Paul proceeds to answer the argument that if the Law was never given as a means of salvation, then that fact, it appears, leaves the Law without a reason for being. He asserts that the Law was given because of transgressions – translated which means “to step,” the prefixed preposition, “beyond.” It refers to the act of a person stepping beyond a fixed limit into forbidden territory.

v. 20: In this verse, Paul shows that the promise is superior to the Law, for the former was given directly from God to Abraham, whereas the latter was given to Israel by God through a mediator

v. 21: Paul asks the next logical question: Is, then, the Law contrary to the promises of God for salvation by grace through faith? The answer is that the Law and the promises are not in conflict because each has a distinct function. The Law is a ministry of condemnation. The promises are a ministry of salvation. The Law judges a person on the basis of obedience or disobedience. The promises judge mankind on a basis of faith. The Law, whose ministry is one of condemnation, was not intended to express God's expression of love towards mankind. God's expression of love toward mankind is one of grace. In summary, no Law could give eternal life. The wages of sin is death. The Law demands of the sinner the death penalty, spiritual and physical death. The Law will not accept the good works of a sinner in lieu of the death penalty. Only the precious blood of Jesus could satisfy the righteous demands of the broken Law. Salvation therefore is by grace, since God the Son took the sinner's place on the Cross and offers salvation to the one who believes on Him.

v. 22: Paul The word scripture in the singular refers to a particular passage. Two Old Testament passages to which Paul probably has reference, are, Psalm 143:2 (And do not enter into judgment with Your servant, for in Your sight no man living is righteous), quoted in Galatians 2:16. Also, Deuteronomy 27:26 ('Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen. '), quoted in 3:10. Similarly, Romans 3:10ff is a quote from Psalm 14:1-3 and Psalm 53:1-6.

#### **VI. Paul Proves Justification through Faith in Christ (3:23-29)**

v.23: The correct rendering:“before the faith came.” The article identifies the faith mentioned in this verse with the faith spoken of in verse 22, personal faith in Jesus Christ as Savior. Kept means “to guard.”

v. 24: The word translated tutor or schoolmaster is better translated, “a teacher.”

v. 26: By the change from the first person we, with its reference to the Jews, to the second person you with its reference to his readers, both Jew and Gentile, Paul shows that the wall of separation between Jew and Gentile had been broken down at the Cross, and that both Jew and Gentile become children of God in Christ Jesus.

v. 27: Paul reminds them of how they became united with Christ. When they put their faith in Him as Savior, the Holy Spirit baptized (introduced or placed) them into vital union with Christ (Rom. 6:3; I Cor. 12:13). The reference is not regarding water baptism, for that never put a believing sinner in Christ.

v 28: The individual differences between Jew and Greek, between slave and free, male and female, are merged in that higher unity into which all believers are raised by the fact that they all have a common life in

Christ Jesus.

v 29: The Judaizers taught that by becoming subjects of the Mosaic law, the Galatian Gentiles would become the seed or progeny of Abraham. Paul asserts that this privilege comes to one by faith in Christ. In Romans 4, Paul shows that Abraham was justified by faith, and was thus constituted the spiritual father of all who put their faith in Christ, whether they are circumcised or uncircumcised.

### **SOME TAKE AWAYS FROM TODAY'S LESSON**

Today we glean some takeaways to help us live more Christ-like and Christ-centered lives. In other words, here are some practical truths for you to apply as a result of this lesson:|

1. When in the midst of conflict with one or more individuals, remember to begin with asking direct questions to gather factual data (see Proverbs 18:1, 3, 5).
2. Remember that it is critical to learn to be discerning. Daily fill your mind with hearing, reading, studying, memorizing, and meditating on the Word so that you are not persuaded or bewitched by others attempting to lure you away from faith in Christ.
3. Thank the Lord each day that He has given you the gift of salvation through faith in the Lord Jesus and, as a result, redeemed you out of slavery to sin.
4. Identify ways where you have been divisive among other believers and pursue ways to promote and practice the unity you have in Christ since he has graciously redeemed you to follow His example.