



BAND of BROTHERS

SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 3

Galatians 3: Faith-Filled Living

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

– Galatians 3:8-9 ESV

- **A question of faith**

- Galatians is Paul's pastoral guidance to a community in confusion
- Judaizers were teaching Gentiles must follow Jewish Laws
- This chapter forces you to answer foundational questions
 - Are we justified by Faith?
 - Are we justified by obedience to the Law?
 - What is our modern-day equivalent of the Law?
 - What is the purpose of the Law?
 - Much of the confusion came from the apostles themselves
- Paul argues faith is central not only to our justification but also our sanctification
- The Galatian church had been influenced by false teaching
 - Specifically, salvation required adherence to the law (circumcision)

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? – Galatians 3:1-2 ESV

- Paul uses severe language to get his point across
- Adherence to the Law or justification by faith?
- He reminds them of their own salvation experience

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by^l the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? – Galatians 3:2-5 ESV

- You began to be perfected by the Spirit through faith
- You overcame suffering through faith
- You received the Spirit through faith
- This is how it has always been
- Paul has the entire scope of salvation in mind

...just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? – Galatians 3:6 ESV

- **God’s plan**

- Paul uses Abraham because he was someone Jews admired
 - His argument was Abraham was not saved by the law
 - He was shown the gospel beforehand in the Covenant

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify^l the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. – Galatians 3:8-9 ESV

- Paul uses the Old Testament to prove his point
- Salvation coming through faith alone in Christ alone has always been the plan of God
- Paul is stressing that you can do nothing to save yourself
- Abraham was not righteous because of the Law
 - He was counted as righteous because of his faith

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. – Galatians 3:9 ESV

- It’s easy to say I have faith alone through Christ alone for justification
- If we are honest, this isn’t always true
 - ~ Faith + prayer ~ Faith + political activism
 - ~ Faith + church attendance ~ Faith + tithing
 - ~ Faith + social justice ~ Faith + nationalism

- **The curse of the law**

"For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.'" - Galatians 3:10 ESV

- Being under the law naturally means you cannot keep it
- If you cannot keep the law, you are cursed
- The law serves as a guardian, not a savior
- Keeping every standard of the law is unattainable
 - o Paul is quite clear on this elsewhere

...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. – Romans 3:23 ESV

If you really fulfill the royal law according to the Scripture, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," you are doing well. But if you show partiality, you are committing sin and are convicted by the law as transgressors. For whoever keeps the whole law but fails in one point has become guilty of all of it. For he who said, "Do not commit adultery," also said, "Do not murder." If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a transgressor of the law. – James 2:8-11

"Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because 'the righteous will live by faith.'" – Galatians 3:11 ESV

- Paul knew exactly what he was doing by quoting Habakkuk 2:4
- He points to a well-known Jewish prophecy to prove his point about faith
 - ~ Habakkuk was under the law, yet said the righteous live by faith

*I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, **but Christ who lives in me**. And the life I now live in the flesh **I live by faith** in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. – Galatians 2:20 ESV*

- **The contrast of law and faith**

***But the law is not of faith**, rather "The one who does them shall live by them." – Galatians 3:12 ESV*

- Again, Paul quotes an Old Testament prophecy to make his point
- The law describes the basis for man's justification
- It shows the conditional aspect of the Law
- But our hope doesn't end there

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing

of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. – Galatians 3:13-14 ESV

- Paul reaches a vital point of his argument
- He points to the Substitutionary Atonement of Christ and the freedom we have in Him

"Christ was at the same time exposed to the severity of the divine vengeance in order to deliver us from it. " – John Calvin, Institutes of the Christian Religion

"Jesus absorbed God's wrath for us... Jesus had no sin of his own. It was not his own penalty that he bore, but he was a substitute for others, for those who would be joined to him by faith. This we call penal substitutionary atonement — Jesus reconciled sinners to God by being their substitute punishment. He absorbed in his person God's righteous wrath against us, because of our sin, that we might be free from sin and its penalty and liberated to enjoy such a person forever." – John Piper, Desiring God

- Christ became a curse for us
 - o Again, he goes back to the Old Testament (Deut. 21:23)
 - o This method of death was seen as a curse from God under Jewish law
- Christ became "a curse" to redeem us from THE curse
 - o He took upon himself the divine curse meant for us, providing our redemption

For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. – 2 Corinthians 5:21 ESV

- o Now, the promises of God are available by faith alone in Christ alone

- **The law and the promise**

To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, "And to offsprings," referring to many, but referring to one, "And to your offspring," who is Christ. – Galatians 3:15-16 ESV

- Paul points to our man-made contracts or covenants
- We consider these binding
 - o We put a lot of faith in them
- If we trust and respect human covenants, how much more should God's covenant be seen as permanent and unchangeable?
 - o Paul knew his readers would be confused...

This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. – Galatians 3:17-18 ESV

- The promise that was given to Abraham was meant to be fulfilled in Christ, not the law
 - o The Covenant with Abraham was based on faith
- The law, which came 430 years later, does not surpass the Covenant
 - o Why would God make a covenant based on faith to only change it to be based on the law?
 - o Adherence to the law is not the basis for receiving salvation
 - o The law does not nullify the promises but prepares for faith in Christ

- **The purpose of the law**

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

– Galatians 3:19 ESV

- The law was given as a temporary measure to show us our sin
 - o “because of transgressions”
- The law cannot save
- It was a guide until Christ came
 - o “the offspring”
- So, is the law opposed to the promises of God? Is the law dead?
 - o It plays a complementary role by showing the pervasiveness of sin
 - o It can’t make us righteous which sets the stage for Christ
 - o It points us to Him

Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law. But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith. – Galatians 3:21-24 ESV

- Paul doubles down on the non-saving power of the law
 - o He goes as far as saying it held us captive
 - o The imagery reminds us of a prison restricting freedom
- However, Paul describes the law as a guardian

paidagogos – guardian

 - o Usually, a trustworthy slave was to look after the well-being of a child
 - o It was a supervision and moral guidance role until adulthood
 - o Paul was saying the same about the Law
- The law was given to guide and teach Israel God’s standards
 - o It showed them they fell short of these standards due to sin
 - o It may have been restrictive but it was protective
 - o It highlighted the need for a savior

- Seeing how the Law points us to Christ, we can appreciate our status as sons and heirs justified by faith

- **One in Christ**

...for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise. – Galatians 3:26-29 ESV

- Through faith, not the law, we have been saved
- We are adopted into a new family and made new
 - o We have put on Christ
 - o We are granted full rights and privileges as children of God
 - o Christ's righteousness and identity cover us
- This is why Paul says that we are one in Christ
 - o Not Jew or Greek
 - o Not circumcised or uncircumcised
 - o Not slave or free
 - o Not male or female
- We are Christ
 - o In Christ, our unity transcends all divisions – cultural, social, and beyond
 - Because we are Christ's through faith (not obedience to the law)...
 - ~ We adopted into His family
 - ~ Clothed with His righteousness
 - ~ And called to live that out

- **Discussion questions**

In what ways does faith play a crucial role in every aspect of our spiritual transformation?

Why do you think we tend to believe we are saved by faith but then go back to relying on works for our sanctification?

Being "heirs of the promise," how have we been blessed by this promise being fulfilled?



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SUMMER SERIES 2024 – WEEK 4 HOMEWORK

WEEK 4 – Galatians 4: Adopted and Adapted by God

This lesson is all about God’s provision for our ongoing transformation into Christlikeness. Not only does He provide the basis of our salvation, but He provides everything we need for our ongoing sanctification. Not only has He adopted us into His family as sons, but He has adapted our spiritual capacity by filling us with His Holy Spirit and empowering us to live the life to which we have been called. The main point we need to get across to the men is the futility of trying to please God through human effort and law-keeping. We have been set free from this performance-based mindset but find it so easy to resort back to the you-don’t-get-something-for-nothing model of behavioral modification.

- Read Galatians 4. Write down any thoughts that jump out at you from these verses.
- Now read pages 37-45 of Ken’s Devotional™ on Galatians.
- Go back and read verses 23-29 of chapter three. Paul is going to pick up on this thought as he begins this next section of the letter.

Now, read verses 1-7 of chapter four. What do you think Paul is trying to tell the Gentile believers in Galatia about their roles as heirs of the promise?

When Paul refers to “children...enslaved to the elementary principles of the world,” who do you think he is talking about, Gentiles or Jews, and why?

In verse 5, he talks about those “born under the law.” Who does this refer to?

- Read verses 8-11. Paul now turns his attention to the Galatian believers. What kinds of things were they “enslaved” to before they knew God (think about their past lives as pagan idolaters)?

Look closely at verse 9. Notice that Paul changes his language from them coming to know God to God coming to know them. Why is this significant?

What does he accuse them of in verse 9 and what do you think it means?

- Read verses 12-20 again. What do you think Paul means when he says, “become as I am, for I also have become as you are?”

How does Paul use his past experiences with them to shame them into repentance?

How does he expose the motives of the Judaizers?

- Read Galatians 4:21-31. Why do you think Paul brings up this Old Testament story at this point in his letter? What message is he trying to convey?

For context, read Genesis 16. This will provide you with important details about the lives of these two women. What was the promise that the angel made to Hagar in verses 10-12?

Read Genesis 17:17-21. What does God say regarding Hagar’s son being the heir of the promise and how does this relate to Galatians 4?

How do you think the Galatians, as Gentiles, received and understood this story?

What was it that Paul wanted them to hear and take away from his brief history lesson?