

Series: Galatians Series

Title: Before and After Faith Came

Text: Gal 3: 19-29

Date: Dec 10, 2020

Place: SGBC, NJ

Subject: Before and After Faith Came

The apostle Paul declared that the believer is saved by God's everlasting covenant of grace, not by the law. So the Holy Spirit raises the obvious question that men will have.

Galatians 3: 19: Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;...[we looked at the Mediator before so skip to verse]...21: *Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. 23: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. 29: And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

Proposition: Before Christ came we were under the law but after Christ came we are no longer under the law but are children of God our Father and joint heirs with Christ.

WHEREFORE THEN SERVETH THE LAW?

Galatians 3: 19: Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions,...

The law was added because of transgressions. God gave the ten commandments to *make his child know our* transgressions. He added the law to give some knowledge to his child of how we transgressed the one commandment in Adam, as well as our personal transgressions.

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound.

The law given at Mt. Sinai did not make men sinners. Sin and death reigned from Adam to Moses. Sin and death reigns in unregenerate sinners today. Sin and death are yet in our sinful nature. But when blessed of God the law makes us know our transgressions in Adam and in ourselves.

Romans 3:19: Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God. 20: Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Consider a few of the ten commandments.

Exodus 20: 3: Thou shalt have none other gods before me (or but me)

Has anyone been entirely, perfectly set on God in heart? No, not one. We make self a god. We make gods of those we love. The perishing things of this world steal our affection.

Exodus 20: 7: Thou shalt not take the Name of the Lord thy God in vain; for the LORD will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain.

How many times have we come into the church service without preparing to worship? We sing his name, we pray in his name, we preach his name, often, with our heart on other things, not perfectly set on him. Thus we take his name in vain. Is God that strict? God knows every sinful thought and every thought is sinful.

Exodus 20: 17: Thou shalt not covet...

This is the law Paul said killed self-righteous Saul like it did the rich, young, ruler. Have we ever had a negative thought against giving to needy brethren or giving too abundantly? That is covetousness.

Comparing ourselves with others we may deceive ourselves saying, "My sin is not that bad." But the measure is holy God, not another sinner. God demands holiness and righteousness with no sin. All have sinned and come short of the glory of God. There are no sins "not that bad" before God. To break one law is to be guilty of all and we are all guilty of all. Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in God's sight; For by the law is the knowledge of sin.

UNTIL THE SEED SHOULD COME

Galatians 3: 19: Wherefore then *serveth* the law? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made...

However, when God gave the law, God gave it only for a set time, that is, until Christ the Seed came.

The law was given until Christ came and fulfilled the law for his people which Christ accomplished. He did not destroy it or set it aside, he fulfilled it. He filled it full for his people giving it everything it demanded of us and delivering us from it by his obedience unto death. So our old man is crucified and our new man is righteous in him. Christ made his people holy, just and good in him like his holy law.

Also, the law was given until Christ the Seed enters the heart and creates a new man of incorruptible seed. He makes us behold that Christ is the end for which the law was given. He gives us faith to rest in Christ as is the Righteousness and the Holiness God requires.

Romans 3:21...now the righteousness of God without the law is manifested, being witnessed by the law and the prophets; even the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus...[unto and upon us through faith in him]

So the law was given to reveal sin until Christ comes and brings us to believe on him.

IS THE LAW AGAINST THE PROMISES OF GOD?

Galatians 3: 21: Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law. 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin...

Paul gives as strong an argument as can be given against righteousness or sanctification (life) by the works of the law. There is no Law that God could have given by which righteousness and life could have been obtained by our works.

Notice, *righteousness and life* go together. Righteousness is to be without sin and perfectly obedient before God's law with no record past, present or future of any violation. Life is holiness. If we are born again of God we have life, we are holy within. Paul said, "If the Spirit of Christ be in you the spirit is life because of righteousness." Get that! The spirit within you is life because of Christ's righteousness. Life and righteousness are the same. If I am righteous then I have life; if I am righteous and Christ abides in me then I am holy, I have life. Christ is that holiness, that Life, by which we shall enter into glory forever and without which we cannot see the kingdom of God. If we are righteousness with no sin then we have spiritual and eternal life (holiness) with no death.

But since there is no law that could have given life, it is impossible for us to be righteous and holy by the works of the law, even if only one law was given. Due to our sin-nature, even after conversion, we are incapable of obtaining righteousness and life by the works of the law because the sin of our old nature is mixed with everything we do.

THE PROMISE

Galatians 3: 22: But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe.

"*The scripture*" is the law, as well as all scripture—all God's word concludes us all under sin. But God makes each of his elect conclude our *own selves* under sin. He brings us to see that in our flesh dwells no good thing. We cannot obtain righteousness and life by our works.

But notice the second part of verse 22. This is vital. God shows us that his everlasting covenant promise is:

- *By the faithfulness of Christ alone*—the "faith of Christ" refers to Christ's obedience unto the death of the cross in the place of his people whereby Christ made his people righteous and holy in him.
- *Given freely by his grace*—God chose who he would give the gift to. God purchased the gift by the blood of his Son. God comes and freely gives the gift to us. All is of God's grace freely given.
- To them that God grants faith to believe on Christ—faith to believe on Christ is the gift of God like all other blessings from God.

Romans 5: 20: Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound: 21: That as sin hath reigned unto death, even so might GRACE reign THROUGH RIGHTEOUSNESS unto ETERNAL LIFE by JESUS CHRIST OUR LORD.

This is how we obtain righteousness and life. God comes to a spiritually dead sinner and gives spiritual life and faith in Christ by the Holy Spirit regenerating us making us holy within. Then faith believes righteousness is by Christ's faith, by Christ's obedience, Christ himself. Then believing on Christ, God imputes the righteousness of Christ freely unto us. And God freely gives us eternal life in him—"he that that the Son hath life."

BEFORE FAITH CAME

Galatians 23: But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed. 24: Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

"*Before Faith came*" refers to Christ. It is Christ's Faith—his Righteousness—revealed by God's power through the gospel. Notice this is Faith revealed. That cannot refer to our faith. The Faith revealed is Christ and his Righteousness revealed through he preaching of the gospel as Paul said,

Romans 1: 16: For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek. 17 For therein is the RIGHTEOUSNESS OF GOD REVEALED FROM Faith to faith: as it is written, The just shall live by faith.

Before Christ came and fulfilled the law, before Christ came into our hearts revealing himself to us, we were shut up in a prison. We were guilty and sentenced to death. So we were locked up in prison in bondage and chains from which we could not free ourselves. We were "*kept under the law, shut up to the faith [of Christ] which should afterward be revealed.*"

So even though God's elect were heirs of God our Father by divine election until Christ came we were under the law as a schoolmaster, a pedagogue—"Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith."

A schoolmaster (pedagogue) treated the master's child as a servant. The pedagogue's job was to discipline the child with no mercy. The pedagogue lashed the child hard for his offenses. He made the child think it impossible to do that which was good. It was painful to the child. The child might be the future heir. But while under the strict rule of the schoolmaster he was treated as a servant—as a slave with lashings. That was how it was for the elect Jew under the law. It was impossible for him to keep the law. And that is how it is when God made us hear the law.

Galatians 4: 1: Now I say, *That* the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; 2: But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father. 3: Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

AFTER FAITH CAME

Galatians 3: 25: But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. 26: For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. 27: For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. 28: There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in

Christ Jesus. 29: And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Faith came and was made of a woman, made under the law, and redeemed his elect from under the law. Therefore, because we are sons by divine election, God sent forth the Spirit of his Son into our hearts and brought us to cry out to our heavenly Father. So we are no longer slaves under a pedagogue—no longer under the law—we are under grace as the family of God, as sons of God. When we need help we do not go back to the law, we cry to our heavenly Father.

Galatians 4: 4: But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, 5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. 6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. 7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

A BELIEVER'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE LAW

So what relation does we have to the law as believers in Christ.

One, the law declares us righteous in Christ. It bears witness that Christ has justified us. The law justifies us as being justified by the blood of Christ. So we are not servants living in fear. We are sons living in love. Now, we live unto God our Father, not as a fearful servant in bondage. But as a child and heir under the loving care of our faithful Father. When we need help we cry to our heavenly Father through Christ his Son who sends the Spirit of his Son into our hearts.

Two, personally, we know the ten commandments are holy, just and good. We know this in our inward man where God has written the law of righteousness. The law revealed (and reveals) our sins to us. The law also helps us see our holy, just and good Savior who fulfilled it for us. So God's child delights in the law in the inward man. Since Christ reigns in the new man a believer has no desire to break the ten commandments, by his Spirit we endeavor not to. But the Spirit has made us hear the law and know our sin-nature is still sin so we look only to Christ. We know we have kept them all perfectly in Christ and that is who our faith rests in.

Three, under the rule of faith, the Spirit of God restrains our sin-nature by the love of Christ, not by the law. Love is far more powerful than law. So the Spirit of Christ keeps us from committing sin to the degree we would otherwise (Gal 5: 17). Yet, to keep us from putting confidence in our works and to keep us trusting Christ alone, the Spirit keeps us hearing the law tell us sin is mixed with everything we think and do due to our sin-nature. So though it may appear to others we are keeping the law outwardly, the Spirit keeps us knowing we can never put any confidence in any works we do.

Likewise, when we are overcome in a fault in thought or deed, the Spirit shows us Christ's love for us in fulfilling the law and by this the Spirit keeps us repenting from our sins and from our self-righteousness. It is Christ who turns us from ourselves to him not law. He continually reveals to us Christ's love for us in fulfilling the law, in crucifying our sinful flesh so that it is dead before God. The Spirit keeps us believing Christ to be our only Righteousness. Thereby, we are not overly cast down but comforted in Christ and constrained by his love when we behold our sin.

Lastly, by the Spirit making us hear the law declare us sinners and by making us behold Christ is our only Righteousness for whose sake we are forgiven continually, knowing this about ourselves the Spirit keeps us glorifying God for the good our brethren do while merciful when a brother is overtaken.

Before Christ came we looked to ourselves and knew men after the flesh. *After Christ came* we look only to Christ and know one another as spiritual, that is, as righteous and holy sons of God who are as perfect in Christ as Christ himself.

Amen!