

Faith Saves / Works Serve

Galatians 3.10-14 ~ September 12, 2010

Review of Galatians 1 to 2

- In **chapters 1 and 2** Paul summarizes the Galatian experience
 - **1.1-5** – By comparison to other letters he greets them gruffly
 - **1.6-10** – He emphasizes there is only one saving gospel
 - **1.11-2.10** – He defends his apostleship
 - **2.11-21** – He defends the gospel against Peter's hypocrisy

Review of Galatians 3.1-9

- Emphasizes that salvation has always been through faith (Abraham)
 - In **3.6** he references Abraham being saved by faith (**Gen 15.6**)
 - Abraham was saved prior to being circumcised
 - In **3.8** he references Abraham saving the Gentiles (**Gen 12.3**)
 - Abraham was a Gentile believer ~ and would bless the world
- All are saved as Abraham was saved ~ by trusting God through faith

Overview of Gal 3.10-14

- Paul now addresses the Judaizers likely objection ~ the law of Moses
 - After all – Moses came long after Abraham – He changed things . . .
- Paul shows in four OT quotations that nothing changed:
 - **Dt 27.26** ~ all who fail to keep the law are cursed
 - **Hab 2.4** ~ the just live by faith – as Abraham did
 - **Lev 18.5** ~ law and faith are unrelated
 - **Dt 21.23** ~ Jesus became a curse for us via the cross

v10 ~ Verse 10 starts us out with something of a puzzle . . .

- **Read verse 10** ~ Paul "*proves*" his statement with a reference
 - But the statement and the support reference seem at odds . . .
 - Martin Luther said this: ~ "*These two statements, one by Paul and the other by Moses, appear to conflict. Paul declares, 'Whosoever shall do the works of the Law, is accursed.'* Moses declares, '*Whosoever shall not do the works of the Law, is accursed.*'"
 - *Is there a conflict here?*

- **Xition: No . . . We must understand what "of the works of the law" means . . .**

v10a ~ “of the works of the law”

- This refers to those that seek their security | safety in law-keeping
 - For these people salvation depends upon the quality of their work
 - Nearly all pagan religions and cults hold this view . . .
 - *Ill: “Peace Child” and “Lords of the Earth”*

v10b ~ “under the curse”

- To be “*under the curse*” is to be outside of God’s favor
 - And all humanity was under the curse - Jews included
 - **Read Gal 3.22** ~ “*Scripture has confined all under sin*”
 - **Psalm 14.2-3** ~ “*The LORD looks down from heaven upon the children of men, To see if there are any who understand, who seek God. They have all turned aside, They have together become corrupt; There is none who does good, No, not one.*”
 - **Daniel 9.10-12** ~ “*We have not obeyed the voice of the LORD our God, to walk in His laws, which He set before us by His servants the prophets. Yes, all Israel has transgressed Your law, and has departed so as not to obey Your voice; therefore the curse and the oath written in the Law of Moses the servant of God have been poured out on us, because we have sinned against Him.*”
 - Moses himself sinned and was prevented from entering the Promised Land
 - Abraham was an idolator in his youth before God appeared to him

Jews perish with the Law ~ Gentiles perish without the law

- In **Romans 2.11-13** Paul writes, “[T]here is no partiality with God. For as many as have sinned without law will also perish without law, and as many as have sinned in the law will be judged by the law (for not the hearers of the law are just in the sight of God, but the doers of the law will be justified.”
 - The Jews were hearers of the law, but not doers of the law ...
 - Some may have done their best, but it was not good enough ...

Impossibility of perfection

- *Ill*: Imagine attending the most difficult college on earth
 - This school would make Yale and Harvard look like pre-schools
 - Graduation requires completing 34 courses with 4.0 GPA and no demerits
 - There is no extra credit and no way to erase demerits
 - Getting a 4.0 requires perfect attendance, 100% every quiz, test, paper, lab
 - Demerits given for: uncombed hair, lint on clothes, late to class, missing a question when asked, not sitting erectly, texting during class, etc...
 - *btw*: you begin with 1 demerit because your father failed to graduate

Acceptance of your condition

- You could learn a lot at this school ~ but you'll never graduate ...
 - This is the CURSE of the LAW
 - But GRACE through FAITH:
 - admitting that you are unworthy and unable to earn a degree
 - but receiving an honorary one because you humbly requested it

Ask, "What does God require of us?"

- God's only standard of righteousness is perfection
 - We cannot earn it, because we were born imperfect
- But the gift of righteousness has always been available
 - This is what Adam & Eve received, Abel, Noah, Abraham, Moses, etc...
 - This gift can be offered to us because it was earned by Christ
- The moral law was coupled with the ceremonial law early in Genesis
 - In **Gen 4** Abel's offering of an animal was accepted by God
 - In **Gen 8** Noah sacrificed animals on an altar when off the ark
 - The ceremonial practices temporarily covered over moral failures

Say, "Let's go on to the rest of our text . . ."

v11 ~ "The just shall live by faith" (Hab 2.4)

- This verse is quoted 3 times in the New Testament
 - **Rom 3.17** ~ "The just shall live by faith" (not sight or works)
 - **Heb 10.38** ~ "The just shall live by faith" (persist in good works)
 - **Gal 3.11** ~ "The just shall live by faith" (righteousness necessary)
 - The Jews needed reminding of all three aspects . . .

Blessing of salvation is received through faith

- **Hebrews 11** ~ The Hall of Faith
 - **v4** ~ "by faith Abel offered to God a more excellent sacrifice ..."
 - **v5** ~ "by faith Enoch was taken away .. because he pleased God"
 - **v6** ~ "But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him."

Xition: Examples of New Testament faith . . .

Examples of great faith

- In **Matthew 8.5-13** the centurion sought Jesus in Capernaum
 - He sought Jesus out to heal his servant (selflessness)
 - Jesus said, *"I have not found such great faith, not even in Israel"*
 - *"Is this saving faith?"* ~ **read v10-12** ~ Sure sounds like it to me...
- In **Matthew 15.21-28** the woman of Tyre sought him (her daughter)
 - She sought out Jesus for the sake of her daughter (selflessness)
 - Jesus said, *"O woman, great is your faith!"*
 - In verse 25 *"she came and worshipped Him"*
- In **Luke 7.36-50** the prostitute washes and anoints Jesus in Simon's home
 - She sought Jesus out to worship and anoint Him
 - Jesus told her, *"Your faith has saved you. Go in peace."* (**v50**)
 - *"Was this a saving faith?"* ~ Yes, it appears so clearly...
- In **Luke 18.9-14** Jesus tells of the Pharisee and the tax collector
 - The proud Pharisee did not have his sins remitted
 - But the humble and repentant (*yet hated*) tax collector did
- Faith has trumped works ever since Cain and Abel

v13a ~ "Christ has redeemed us from the curse"

- Redemption was practiced to repatriate wealthy soldiers/citizens
 - Poor citizens captured in war would be executed or sold into slavery
 - But wealthy citizens would be returned for a ransom
 - Two things to note here:
 1. Those Christ redeemed were not the wealthy or well connected
 2. The price was not just money but His own life in exchange for ours

v13b ~ "having become a curse for us"

- Jesus was not just cursed
 - Christ became a curse
 - Paul says in **2 Cor 5.21** that *"Christ who knew no sin was made sin for us"*
 - He epitomized the evil of the sins
 - Luther refers to this as the *"glorious exchange"*
 - *"When we hear that Christ was made a curse for us, let us believe it with joy and assurance. By faith Christ changes places with us. He gets our sins, we get His holiness."*

Xition: *And why did Jesus become a curse?*

v14 ~ “that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles”

- Abraham was the father of the Jews
- He was a Gentile prior to God entering into his life
- In a sense everyone is a Gentile
 - All true believers are ‘*sons of Abraham*’ ~ we are saved in like manner

Closing:

- Those that keep the law and those that reject the law are cursed
 - We are as it were, “*damned if we do and damned if we don’t*”
 - The only path to God is the path of faith – faith in the only Savior Jesus
 - This path is entirely unrelated to law keeping or law breaking
 - It is based instead upon our great need and upon God’s great provision
- For those that trust in Him, Christ takes their damnation upon Himself
 - He becomes a curse for us, as only He could
 - He then blesses us with every spiritual blessing
 - We do not deserve this
 - But we can accept it, appreciate it, and be forever thankful for it
 - And we can do good works in appreciation of it . . .

Jude 24-25

Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling,
And to present you faultless
Before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy,
To God our Savior, Who alone is wise,
Be glory and majesty,
Dominion and power,
Both now and forever.
Amen.

Let’s Pray