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# Sermon Notes

June 12, 2022

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## The Promise Galatians 3:15-18

### The Promised Spirit

- ❖ Those whom God justifies and reckons as righteous have the Holy Spirit poured into them
- ❖ Part of God's long-term plan for His people
  - looking backward, this is part of the promise made to Abraham that all the nations of the earth would be blessed through him
  - looking forward, this is a promise of the way God will lead His children into the new life of liberty and love
- ❖ The Holy Spirit unites us with Christ in such a real and powerful way that all Christ has becomes ours
- ❖ The covenant God makes with Abraham is ultimately fulfilled in Christ and is 100% dependent on God

### Family Matters

- ❖ **Brothers**
  - despite disappointments, disagreements and disputes, Paul still recognizes the Galatians as his brothers
  - what makes a family a family?

- ❖ Last will and testament
  - expresses the desires and intent of the person making it
  - the provisions a will contains flow in one direction: from the person who makes the will to those who are his/her beneficiaries
  - once a will is signed and witnessed it cannot be changed
  - only takes effect when the person who made it dies
- ❖ Jewish inheritance laws
  - an irrevocable gift could be made to another person prior to one's death
  - the example of the Prodigal Son
    - giving money in this way IS completely unalterable
    - when the money is gone, it's gone!
- ❖ God makes a series of irrevocable promises to Abraham and his offspring (Genesis 12, 15, 17)
  - God ratifies His promises to Abraham through a blood sacrifice
  - when God walks alone through the slain animals, He indicates that His covenant is unilateral, entirely unconditional and that the obligation to fulfill it rests on God and God alone
  - when Christ offers Himself as the ultimate blood sacrifice, Abraham's subsequent descendants are able to begin "cashing in" on their inheritance and receiving the promised blessings immediately
  - believers in Christ are recipients of the inheritance promised to Abraham and his primary offspring, Christ

- ❖ Offspring NOT offsprings (v. 16)
  - the Bible is accurate, unerring and precise
  - Paul knows what it says in Genesis 12:7, 13:15, and 24:7
  - although *offspring* can refer to a single individual, a group of individuals or to both, Paul recognizes that Abraham's promised offspring is Christ (Gen 21:12, 2 Sam 7:12, 14; Matthew 1:1)
  - the promise made to Abraham looks forward to the coming of Christ
- ❖ You do not need to be biologically related to Abraham to claim Abraham's inheritance
  - our family resemblance with Abraham is spiritual not physical
  - we have an inheritance that is marked by innumerable benefits and *every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places*

### Promises Promises

- ❖ Paul is adamant that we understand the great distinction that exists between the promise and the law
  - God gives His people His promise first and His law sometime later
    - the promise is about what God will do
    - God's law is about what we must do
  - the promise has only to be believed, the law has to be obeyed
- ❖ The law does not supersede or supplement the promise

- like a will that has gone through probate, God's promise to Abraham cannot be invalidated, replaced added to or amended
- God's promise came to Abraham in the same way you or I might receive an inheritance today: **FOR FREE**
- ❖ The very reason Christ sets us free from the law of sin and death is so that we can receive the supernatural ability we need to pursue the righteous requirements of the law with joyful obedience instead of dutiful drudgery
  - with respect to salvation, God deals with us according to His promise, not according to our performance
  - salvation rests on a promise that God cannot break

### Personal Application

1. What does it mean to you that you are a beneficiary of promises made to Abraham? How can you claim or start "cashing in" on your inheritance right now?
2. God deals with us according to His promise, not according to our performance. When are you most tempted to look to your own efforts to make yourself acceptable to God?
3. To help you diagnose your heart, ask yourself: "What causes me to feel despair in my life? What makes me feel proud about myself?"