

Galatians: Freedom In Christ

Week 5: Faith Alone! (Gal 3:1 – 14)

Look Around

Have you ever spent a significant amount of time working on something only to find out later that most of your work was unnecessary and there was a much better way to accomplish the task?

Sometimes, even when we know better, we waste time trying to accomplish a task using the wrong method. The same can happen in our spiritual journey. Pursuing salvation by "doing" is exhausting, useless, and unnecessary! Never fall prey to this curse. Always remember you have been granted the gift of the Holy Spirit, who frees you from the endless doing of the law when you profess faith in Christ.

Look at the Text – Key Concepts

- **Justified** – Justification is a declaration from God that you are innocent of sin. Instead, you are in right standing (righteous) before Him. God, the judge, grants you freedom instead of condemnation. Justification is God's declaration about the status of the relationship between God and an individual, not any change within the individual. In other words, justification doesn't make anyone holy; it simply declares us not guilty before God and, therefore, treated as holy.

- **Righteousness** – righteousness embodies the character, behavior, and status appropriate for the covenant relationship between God and humanity. God demonstrates righteousness by being faithful to his promises. Humanity expresses righteousness in and through loyal obedience to God's commands.

- **The Law** – The Mosaic Law refers to the laws God gave Moses on Mount Sinai after releasing the Israelites from slavery in Egypt. They include the Ten Commandments, ordinances for living in society, and regulations for worship (requirements for priests, sacrifices, feasts, and the temple). The Bible gives at least four reasons God gave the Mosaic Law to His people: for their own good, to reveal Himself to them, to set them apart in order to reveal Himself to others, and to reveal humanity's need for a savior.
- **The Spirit** – God sent his spirit, the Holy Spirit, to transform the character of God's people and to empower them to carry out God's will and purpose.

Look at the Text – Context

Galatians 3:1-5 is considered the thesis statement for the entire letter. However, instead of giving a single statement that clearly spells out his point, Paul gives a series of rhetorical questions that draw on the conversion experience of the Galatians. By doing so, Paul hopes to rely on the move of the Holy Spirit the Galatians have already experienced by faith to prove that the law is unnecessary as they continue life following Jesus. Paul also begins an extended argument that, since the beginning, God intended salvation to come by faith, and The Law was never meant to save. The Law was then, and is still now, a temporary measure until Christ arrived.

Look at the Text – Observation & Interpretation

Galatians 3:1 – 5

Observation

- Paul uses a list of rhetorical questions to communicate his point. List every question in Galatians 3:1 – 5 and provide the answer Paul would have expected.

- What does Paul mean by righteousness in this passage?

- Considering the story of Abraham, what evidence do we have that Scripture predicts Gentiles are to be justified by faith?

Galatians 3:10 – 14

Observation

- Who does Paul consider "the righteous"?

- Why doesn't the law justify?

- According to this passage, what is the outcome of living by the law?

- According to this passage, what is the outcome of living by faith?

Interpretation

- Remembering that the law cannot justify, why does Paul consider the law a "curse"?

- What should the primary expression of our faith be to receive God's promises?

Look At God

- Take a moment to imagine what it might have been like to live life by the law. Here is a link to an article that summarizes and categorizes The Law: <https://www.sots.ac.uk/wiki/law-in-the-old-testament/>. What images, thoughts, and feelings come up for you as you consider what it might have been like to live by the law?

- By sending Christ to die for the forgiveness of our sins, God put a stop to the endless doing of the law. Now, our belief in Christ grants salvation, acceptance, and the gift of the Spirit. Take a moment to consider the gift Christ gave by removing the burden of the law. Write a prayer that expresses your feelings about receiving such a gift.

Look At Me

- What does living by faith look like to you?

- Consider your life. Do you find any places where you live by the law instead of living by faith? If so, what does living by The Law look like in your life?

- What are some of the damaging effects of living by The Law in your life?

- How can we rely on our faith to remove the unnecessary burden of living life by the law?