

Wednesday Evening Bible Study

February 3, 2021

Series – The Life and Writings of the Apostle Paul

Series - *Paul's Epistle to the Galatians*

Wherefore Serveth the Law

Text – Galatians 3:15 - 29

Introduction

The Letter to the Galatians is very important because it establishes clearly and concisely that salvation is through the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ plus nothing:

Salvation is from the penalty of our sins, which ultimately leads to eternal death in Hell. Salvation also brings us through a personal relationship on this earth with the Lord Jesus Christ ultimately to an eternal destination of Heaven.

Settling the questions of where we go when we die, and how to get there, are really the most important questions that we can answer in this life; and they have to be answered in this life – you cannot wait until you die to find the answers to these questions.

Paul's letter to the churches of Galatia answers these questions.

The Letter to the Galatians demonstrates that the Christian is saved by the grace of God, and also teaches that the Christian life is lived by the grace of God:

"But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith." (Galatians 3:11)

We saw in chapter one where Paul introduced the letter to the believers in Galatia by giving them an extremely strong warning – don't mess with the gospel of grace! The strength of this warning was magnified even more due the fact that it was repeated twice:

"I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ. But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed." (Galatians 1:6-9)

In chapter two we learned that there was some contention between Peter and Paul surrounding the doctrine of grace; but we also saw that out of the contention came Paul's creed on the subject of grace:

"Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." (Galatians 2:16)

In the last message, we saw from the first half of chapter three:

I. A Strong Castigation (vs. 1 – 5)

"O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?" (Galatians 3:1)

II. A Scriptural Illustration (vs. 6 – 9)

Paul then argued his point with the illustration of Abraham from the Old Testament. Paul stated that even in the Old Testament economy, people were not justified by works, but by faith:

"Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." (Galatians 3:6)

III. A Senseless Continuation (vs. 10 – 14)

Paul concluded that it was senseless for them to continue in the Law because if you are going to live by the letter of the Law you will have to be perfect, which, of course, is an impossibility:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." (Galatians 3:10)

Transition

In the second half of chapter 3, Paul will explain the purpose of the Law. In other words, if the Law could not save people, then why was it given in the first place.

I. A Preceding Promise (vs. 15 – 18)

God made a covenant with Abraham hundreds of years prior to the Law being given to Moses at Mt. Sinai.

"Now the LORD had said unto Abram, Get thee out of thy country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, unto a land that I will shew thee: And I will make of thee a great nation, and I will bless thee, and make thy name great; and thou shalt be a blessing:

And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee: and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed." (Genesis 12:1-3)

God made a covenant, a promise, with Abraham, which basically declared two things:

1. God was going to give Abraham a son, and through this child was going to be born:
 - a. The People of Israel
 - b. The Messiah
2. God was going to give Abraham, through his seed, the Land of Israel.

Abraham was confused about how God was going to fulfill this covenant with him, as he was an old man without a child, and in chapter 15, God reaffirmed the covenant with Abraham:

"After these things the word of the LORD came unto Abram in a vision, saying, Fear not, Abram: I am thy shield, and thy exceeding great reward. And Abram said, Lord GOD, what wilt thou give me, seeing I go childless, and the steward of my house is this Eliezer of Damascus? And Abram said, Behold, to me thou hast given no seed: and, lo, one born in my house is mine heir. And, behold, the word of the LORD came unto him, saying, This shall not be thine heir; but he that shall come forth out of thine own bowels shall be thine heir. And he brought him forth abroad, and said, Look now toward heaven, and tell the stars, if thou be able to number them: and he said unto him, So shall thy seed be. And he believed in the LORD; and he counted it to him for righteousness." (Genesis 15:1-6)

The point is the covenant was given to Abraham hundreds of years before the Law was given, and Abraham “believed in the Lord; and he (the Lord) counted it to him (Abraham) for righteousness”. The promise did not involve Law, but it did involve faith; and the Law could not change the promise. The Law does, however, cooperate with the promise in a very interesting way.

II. An Intolerant Instructor (vs. 19 – 25)

Here is where we see the true purpose of the Law – it was our schoolmaster. It pointed out all of our imperfections, all of our flaws, all of our errors. It declared plainly that we are imperfect sinners.

In Romans 3, Paul will again point out man’s total inability to save himself by conforming to the demands of the Law. Turn to Romans 3:9 – 31.

The Law proves to us that we cannot do it on our own. It shows us that we need God to do it for us. Jesus kept the Law. Jesus never sinned, and then Jesus died on the cross to pay the penalty for my inability to keep the Law. The Law condemned me to death, but Jesus paid my sin debt.

Illustration:

A man was driving in his car with his young child on his lap. Both dad and child have their hands on the steering wheel. The child demands that he can do it himself, but shortly after the dad takes his hands off of the wheel, the car begins to veer off of the road towards disaster. The child then cries out to the dad to help him.

1. The Law was given to point out sin.
2. The Law was given to prepare people for Christ.

III. A Comforting Conclusion (vs. 26 – 29)

“Ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus” (Galatians 3:26)

It is comforting to know that we are God’s children, not because we have kept the Law, but rather because we have received God’s Son:

“But as many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on his name:” (John 1:12)

It gets better:

“For as many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God. For ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear; but ye have received the Spirit of adoption, whereby we cry, Abba, Father. The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together.” (Romans 8:14-17)

How do you become a child of God? By obeying the Law? By going to church? By paying your tithes? By being circumcised? By being religious?

No, we become the children of God through faith in Jesus Christ.

Notice in v. 27 - “put on Christ” – This means that the believer has exchanged the filthy and sinful robes of his flesh for a robe of Christ’s righteousness. I am now wearing Christ’s righteousness. I tried to clean up my old garments by doing good works, and obeying the letter of the Law. The more I tried to clean them it seemed the dirtier they got. I finally threw off those old tattered garments, and He gave me a robe of pure white.

And now I am a joint-heir with Christ. Everything the Father has in store for the Son, I will receive with Him.

What a blessing it is to be a Christian!

Have you placed your faith in Jesus Christ?