

Approximately Expository 35 minutes



From Law to Promise

Galatians Chapter 3

Opening Prayer:

Father God, we come before You in the name of Jesus. Thank You for Your Word, which is living and active. Lord, open our hearts to understand grace more deeply today. Remove confusion. Remove legalism. Remove pride. Help us see the beauty of the cross and the power of faith. And if there is anyone listening who does not truly know You, draw them to salvation today. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Historical Setting:

The churches in Galatia were in crisis.

Paul had preached the **gospel of grace** throughout this Roman province during his first missionary journey (Acts chp 13-14). Gentiles had believed. The Holy Spirit had moved. Lives were changed.

But soon after Paul left, Jewish legalists arrived teaching a dangerous message:

“Faith in Jesus is good... but it’s not enough.”

👉 They were claiming Gentile believers must follow the Law of Moses....especially circumcision....to be fully saved.

😞 They weren’t denying Jesus.

! They were adding to Jesus.

🔒 🔑 And whenever you add to grace, you subtract from Christ.

Galatians chapter 3 is Paul's passionate defense of **justification by faith alone**.

This chapter explains:

- Why the law cannot save.
- Why faith is the only way.
- Why Abraham himself proves it.
- Why Christ redeemed us from the curse.

This chapter is theological....but it's also deeply personal.

💡 Because if we misunderstand grace, we will live either in pride or in guilt.

👉 But if we understand grace, we will live in freedom.

1. Bewitched by Legalism (Galatians 3:1-5):

Let us get into God's Word....



(NIV)

Galatians 3:1-5 You

foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

Paul opens with strong words:

“You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” (v.1)

That word **“bewitched”** means to cast a spell.

Paul is saying, **“Who hypnotized you? Who confused you?”**

Then he asks one of the most powerful questions in Scripture:

“Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?” (v.2)

Paul says....

- How did they get saved?
- By keeping rules?
- 👉 Or by believing the gospel?

Paul’s answer is simple and powerful:

- They were **not** saved by keeping the law.
- They believed the gospel.
- They received the Holy Spirit by faith.

And God worked miracles among them because they trusted what they had heard about Jesus.

Then Paul asks:

“After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” (v.3)

This is still a danger today.

! We start by grace.

😬 Then we try to grow by effort or works.

! We're saved by faith...

😬 But then we try to earn God's approval.

Christian growth is not self-powered.

👉 It is Spirit-empowered.

🔒 🔑 You cannot perfect in the flesh what began in the Spirit.

2. Abraham: The Pattern of Faith **(Galatians 3:6-9):**



(NIV)

Galatians 3:6-9 ⁶ **So also**

Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Now Paul goes back to Abraham.

“So also Abraham ‘believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.’”

(v.6)

Abraham lived 430 years before the Law was given.

- He wasn't justified by the law.



- He wasn't circumcised yet when declared righteous.
- He believed God.

! Faith came first.

Paul says:

“Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.” (v.7)

Paul is making it clear that Abraham's true family is not defined only by physical ancestry. The real children of Abraham are those who believe God the way Abraham believed God.

  In other words, a person belongs to God's family not by bloodline, background, or religious tradition, but by faith in the promises of God fulfilled in Jesus Christ.

“All nations will be blessed through you.” (v.8)

! The gospel was always God's plan.

👉 Grace was never Plan B.

God promised Abraham that salvation would come through faith....**and that promise is fulfilled in Christ.**

So.....

“Those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham.” (v.9)

👉 Blessing comes by faith.
Not by performance.

3. The Curse of the Law (Galatians 3:10-14):

Galatians 3:10-14 ¹⁰ For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” ¹¹ Clearly no one who relies on the

law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.”¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.”¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.”¹⁴ He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Now Paul explains the danger of relying on law.

“For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.” (v.10)

 **Why?**

! Because the law demands perfection.

If you choose law as your path to righteousness, you must obey it perfectly.....every day, every thought, every action.

👉 And none of us can.

“The righteous will live by faith.” (v.11)

Then comes one of the most powerful statements in Scripture:

“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.” (v.13)

! Redeemed means purchased.
Bought back.

🔓🔑 On the cross, Jesus took the curse we deserved.



! He didn't just forgive sin.

👉 He absorbed the penalty.

😞 **Why?**

“So that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.” (v.14)

! Grace flows from the cross.

  You are not cursed if you are in Christ.
You are redeemed.

4. Promise Over Law (Galatians 3:15-18):

Galatians 3:15-18 ¹⁵ **Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.** ¹⁶ **The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.** ¹⁷ **What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the**

covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. ¹⁸ **For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.**

Paul now explains that God's promise to Abraham came before the law.

The law came 430 years later.

And the law does not cancel the promise.

💡 God made a covenant with Abraham based on promise.....not performance.



😬 Paul says the promise was made to **Abraham's "seed."**


🔓 🔑 And that seed is Christ.

Salvation rests on God's promise, not our performance.



God promised that blessing and salvation would come through Abraham's promised Seed Jesus Christ.

God kept that promise.

  Jesus came, died for our sins, rose again, and finished the work of salvation.

 So we are saved because God made the promise, and Jesus, Son of God, fulfilled it completely.

5. Why the Law Then? (Galatians 3:19-25):

  (NIV) **Galatians 3:19-25** ¹⁹ **Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator.** ²⁰ **A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.**

21 Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. 22 But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. 23 Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. 24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.



So why did God give the law?

“It was added because of transgressions until the Seed... had come.” (v.19)

- 👉 The law was temporary.
 - The law exposes sin.
 - It reveals our need.
 - It shows us we cannot save ourselves.

Paul says:

“The law was our guardian until Christ came.” (v.24)

A guardian was like a tutor or strict supervisor who watched over a child until the child was mature.

That is what the law did.

- It restrained sin.
- It taught right from wrong.
- It exposed our guilt before God.



👉 But the law could not save us.

The law’s purpose was to show us our need for **Jesus**.

🔓 🗝️ Once we come to Christ by faith, we are no longer under the law as our

guardian. The law pointed us to the Savior, but it was never meant to take the place of the Savior.

6. Sons and Daughters of God (Galatians 3:26-29):

  (NIV) **Galatians 3:26-29** ²⁶ **So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith,** ²⁷ **for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.** ²⁸ **There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.** ²⁹ **If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**

Now Paul brings it home.

“So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith.” (v.26)

➤ Not through works.

- Not through rituals.
- 👉 Through faith.

“For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” (v.27)

You are covered in the righteousness of Christ.

👉 God no longer sees you according to your sin, but according to the finished work of Jesus.

💡 Then Paul gives this beautiful statement about the unity we now have in Christ:

“There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” (v.28)

God’s grace brings believers together as one family.

! In Christ, our deepest identity is not based on race, social status, background, or gender.



🙄 Those things may describe parts of our earthly life, but they do not define our standing before God.

👉 Our true identity is found in Jesus Christ.

“If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.” (v.29)

In Christ, we are heirs of God’s promise.

- We are not spiritual outsiders.
- We are not temporary guests.
- We are not waiting to see if God will accept us.

  Through **faith in Jesus**, we fully belong to God's family and share in the promises He gave through Abraham.

Invitation: Be Born Again:

 Maybe you've been trying to live under law.

Maybe you feel:

- . Not good enough.
- . Not spiritual enough.
- . Not worthy enough.

Galatians chapter 3 says:

 You cannot earn salvation.

You are justified by **faith alone in Jesus Christ**.

- Christ became a curse for you.
- He paid your debt.
- He rose again in victory.

  You must be born again.

That means:

- Turn from trusting yourself.
- Turn from sin.
- Put your faith completely in Jesus.

💡 Salvation is not about trying harder.
It is about trusting deeper.

Right now, this very moment, you can pray:

Pray this or something like this....

“Lord Jesus, I know I am a sinner.... I cannot save myself..... I believe You died for me and rose again..... Forgive me..... Come into my life..... Be my Lord and Savior..... I place my trust in You alone.”
Amen.

If you pray that sincerely, with faith from your heart, the Bible says you are a child of God.

- Not by works.
- By grace.

- Through faith.

Welcome to the family of God.

Closing Exhortation:

Brothers and Sisters, don't drift back to law.

- Live in promise.
- Walk in freedom.
- Stand firm in grace.

The righteous will live by faith.

Let us Pray.....

Closing Prayer:

Father God, thank You for redeeming us from the curse. Thank You that we are justified by faith alone. Help us walk in freedom and never return to legalism. Anchor us in the finished work of Christ. And Lord God, for those who have just placed their trust in You, fill them with Your Holy Spirit and grow them strong in grace. We give You all the glory. In Jesus' mighty name, Amen.



Matthew 28:19-20