



"REASONS TO REJOICE"

"Your Words were found, and I ate them, and Your Word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart." Jeremiah 15:16

GALATIANS LESSON 3

In Galatians chapter 3, Paul moves from a personal exhortation to a doctrinal defense of justification by faith. He begins by reminding the Galatian believers that they had experienced a moving of the Holy Spirit when they accepted Christ by faith. He was shocked that after receiving this gift from God, they would be convinced by the Judaizers that their experience wasn't complete. They needed to add the works of the law. They needed to be circumcised, and then they would be acceptable to God. How could they believe this, when they had already accepted Christ through faith? It seems like Paul is trying to shake them back to reality by using personal testimony, doctrinal proof, and logical reasoning. Let's read on and see what happens.

First Day

1. Read Galatians 3:1-29. Observe and list the facts you find in this chapter. Find any repeated words or phrases? Whom does Paul use to prove his argument?
2. Give the main thought of each section.

Verses 1-5:

Verses 6-9:

Verses 10-14:

Verses 15-18:

Verses 19-29:

3. How does Galatians 3:1 relate to 2:20-21?

4. The word "foolish" in verse 1 means "spiritual dullness" or "mindless behavior." Why does he use that term?

J.B. Phillips translates verse 1 even more bluntly. He writes, "O you dear idiots of Galatia, who saw Jesus Christ the crucified so plainly, who has been casting a spell over you?" It appeared to Paul that they had been bewitched and led astray by sorcery. They hadn't personally seen Jesus in Jerusalem, but Paul had graphically portrayed to them the sufferings and death of Christ. Paul says Jesus was "portrayed" among you. William Barclay translates this phrase as "placarded." He said this: "This is the Greek word that would be used for putting up a poster. It is actually used for a notice put up by a father to say that he will no longer be responsible for his son's debts; it is also used for putting up the announcement of an auction sale." In other words, it was made very clear to them. They knew.

5. How, Paul asks, did the work of God start in their lives? How are they trying to finish it?

6. What's the difference between doing a work in the flesh and doing it in the Spirit? Would the result be the same? What would be different?

7. The Galatians had obviously suffered persecution for their faith in Christ. What would happen if they were to put themselves back under the law?

8. Give an example of beginning something in the Spirit and completing it in the flesh. Have you ever started something in the Spirit and finished it by using your own human effort? What was the result?

9. Why is receiving the Holy Spirit, but depending on self, so foolish?

10. Fill in the blanks.
The Law demands _____. Grace demands _____.

I pray that we won't be like the foolish Galatians and forget what we know to be true. Our salvation is a free gift from God, given to us through faith in Jesus Christ. Amen, sister!

Memory Verse of the Week: "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'The just shall live by faith.'" Galatians 3:11

Second Day

Review your memory verse. Are you counting on a set of rules to save you?

Paul reminded them that the Holy Spirit saves them but also continues the work in a believer's life. They don't need to substitute anything else. Now Paul uses a character the Jews loved and admired to prove his point. He takes them back farther than Moses, the giver of the law, to Abraham, the father of their nation.

1. Read Galatians 3:1-9. What was Abraham justified by? (Also read Romans 4)
2. Read the following verses. What do they tell us about Abraham? (Genesis 12:1-8, 13:14-18, and 15:1-6)
3. Read Hebrews 11:8-19. How many times is the word "faith" used? How did Abraham live by faith?
4. Read Hebrews 11:1-7. Who else lived by faith?

The Jews believed that the promises of God were only for the biological descendants of Abraham, but verse 8 tells us that "all nations may be blessed." The Old Testament saints had a much smaller knowledge of God, but had faith in the truth they did know. They were saved by putting their trust completely in the promises of God, which were a foreshadowing of the coming Christ. This principle of faith was not new, and those who chose to live by faith are considered true sons of Abraham. The Jews were forgetting that God had recognized Abraham as righteous because he believed God before he was even circumcised. Circumcision was a physical sign to identify His people and set them apart from the pagans around them, but it was not a means of salvation.

5. Not only is Abraham's life an example of faith, it's an example of obedience. How?

6. Are you "living by faith"? How do we practically do this day by day? In what areas of your life is it a struggle to "live by faith"?

7. Abraham moved when God said "GO." How about you? Is your life characterized by obedience? Read John 14:15.

8. Why is it so important that we are sons of Abraham? What does that say to us about the promises of God?

9. We've talked a lot about the Holy Spirit. What do you know about Him? Read these verses to refresh your memory and list what they say about the Spirit.
 - a. John 16:7-11
 - b. Acts 7:51
 - c. John 3:1-8
 - d. Ephesians 1:13-14
 - e. Ephesians 5:18-21
 - f. Acts 1:1-8

If you have accepted Christ, you have been born of the Spirit. He seals you as a guarantee that He will return for you and take you home with Him. We should ask the Holy Spirit to baptize us by coming upon us to give us power to live the Christian life, and we should be filled with the Spirit daily, which means to be controlled by Him, rather than our self.

10. Do you ask to be filled with the Holy Spirit daily, to accomplish His purpose in your life? He wants to fill you to overflowing, allowing you to spill out on others.

That's it for today. I pray that we will not try to finish in the flesh what we have begun in the Spirit. I've tried it. It doesn't work.

Third Day

What's your verse? Do you understand it?

1. Read Galatians 3:10-14. Who has redeemed us from the curse of the Law? Why?

Paul explains to them that those who try to live under the law are putting themselves under a curse, because it is not possible to keep the Law perfectly. It takes a perfect life to make it to Heaven. Total, complete, obedience to God. Without a speck of sin. Everything we do has to be holy, pure, righteous, and perfect. Can we do it? No way. Swindoll said, "It takes perfection to get into Heaven. As Paul explains in these verses, such a perfect life must be either lived by us or for us. And since no one but Jesus Christ has ever lived a perfect life, He is the only One who can grant that perfect life to sinners."

2. According to verse 10, how much of the law has to be kept if you choose to live under the Law? (Paul is quoting Moses' words from Deuteronomy 27:26 when he was speaking to the Israelites before they entered the Promised Land. He was telling them to obey God fully.) Also read James 2:10.
3. Do you try to be "perfect"? The perfect mom or the perfect wife? How about the perfect Christian? Why is this so dangerous?

Christ "redeemed" us from the Law, which is a term used of buying back a slave's freedom. Christ bought us back from our slavery to sin. He paid a high price, shedding His own blood for us (1 Peter 1:19). Christ became the curse for us, acting as a substitute. As it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." (Galatians 3:13, 1 Peter 2:24) In Israel, often a criminal was killed by stoning and then tied to a post, or a type of tree. His body would hang until sunset to show people this criminal was rejected by God. When Jesus died on the cross, the Jews just couldn't believe that God would curse the Messiah and allow His body to hang on a tree. This was their proof that Jesus was not the Messiah. As Christians, this is our proof that He is our Messiah, as He took this curse upon Himself, for us.

4. So ... if we aren't bound to live by the Law, what place does good works have in a believer's life? Read the following verses and briefly explain the relationship between faith and works. (Ephesians 2:10, James 1:22, James 2:14-26)

5. Is your faith accompanied by good works?

John W. Stott said, "Faith is laying hold of Jesus Christ personally." There is no merit in it. It is not another 'work.' Its value is not in itself, but entirely in its object, Jesus Christ."

6. How can you bring this principle into your home? How can you teach your kids to "lay hold of Jesus personally"?

7. Name some practical ways to teach your children the balance between faith and works. How do we show them the importance of good works without putting them on a "works trip"?

See you tomorrow! May your life be a sweet fragrance to Him as you walk in His Spirit!

Fourth Day

Review your verse. How is it speaking to your heart?

In our next section, Paul answers the question of whether or not the covenant made with Abraham is voided by the Law. Since Paul was hammering the Law so much, the Galatians were probably wondering if the Law was good for anything at all. The Judaizers were most likely arguing that even though Abraham was justified by faith, the Law came many years after that, superseding what was before. How does Paul respond?

1. Paul gives us both the negative aspects of the Law, and then he gives us the purpose of it. Read Galatians 3:15-29. Can the Law break a covenant?

In the Greek, the word "covenant" applied to various transactions between God and man, and man and his fellowman. (Unger's Bible Dictionary) A covenant held both parties to certain obligations and they were often sealed with a type of ceremony. There were penalties for breaking the covenant, and many times the ceremony illustrated what would happen to either party if the covenant was broken (Genesis 15:9-10, 17). God's agreement to Abraham was one sided, though. God made promises and Abraham just had to accept them.

God dealt with His people through covenants. God made a promise to Noah that He would never destroy the world by a flood again (Genesis 9:8-17). He made a covenant with Abraham (Genesis 12:1-3, chapter 15), with the Israelites (Exodus 24:3), David (2 Samuel 7:12, 16; 22:51), and of course, Jesus was the Mediator of the New Covenant, offered as the true and final sacrifice for our sins (Luke 22:20). Paul's point here? A covenant is binding. God keeps His Word.

2. Who made the promise to whom? Was Abraham given any conditions to meet?

3. What's Paul's point in verse 17? (Can God's promises stand the test of time?)

Most scholars disagree over the 430 years mentioned in verse 17. No one is exactly sure what time period Paul is referring to. A popular thought is that Paul is counting from the time Jacob went into Egypt, when God appeared to him and reaffirmed the covenant (Genesis 46:1-4). If that's true, the 430 years would be the time from God's confirmation of His promise to Jacob until the giving of the Law at Sinai. Paul's point is that time, no matter how long, cannot cancel the covenant.

4. The Bible is full of God's promises for you. Can anything break them? (Read 2 Corinthians 1:20.) Can you share with your group one or two promises from God's Word? (How do you know if the promise is specifically for you?)
5. How should the promises of God affect how you live? How should they calm your fears or remove your doubts?
6. Do you have any fears that seem to overshadow your faith? What should you do?
7. How are you doing in the promise-keeping category? Do you make promises, only to break them because of time restraints, laziness, etc.? Do you think keeping your word is important as a Christian? Why?

8. God is always faithful to His Word. From what you know about Paul, how is God's faithfulness illustrated through his life?

Tomorrow we'll finish up this chapter. God's promise to us through Abraham is unconditional. Isn't that amazing? Abraham made a lot of mistakes himself, yet God was true to His Word. His faithfulness doesn't depend on us. **Psalm 119:90** says, "Your faithfulness endures to all generations." That's a "**Reason to Rejoice!**"

Fifth Day

Write your verse from memory. Are you thankful for the gift of faith?

1. Finish up today by reading Galatians 3:19-29. Paul now shares with us the purpose of the Law.
2. How would you summarize the purpose of the Law from this section? Also read Romans 7:7.

"Transgressions" in verse 19 means to step over the boundary or a deviation from the right track. Paul was speaking of intentional faults. The Law was added to point out our inability to please God by our own works, and our complete sinfulness.

3. The Law was inferior to God's covenant because it was given through two mediators. Who were they? (Exodus 19:18-24, Acts 7:53)

4. Was there a mediator between God and Abraham? Read Genesis 12:1-3 and Genesis 15:1-7.
5. What point is Paul making here?
6. From this section, list what the Law cannot do, and then what it can do.

We would never know we are guilty of anything if there were no law. John MacArthur said this: "Forgiveness means nothing to a person who is either unaware he has done anything wrong or is unconvinced the wrong he knows he has done produces any serious consequences to him. Grace means nothing to a person who does not know he is sinful, and that such sinfulness means he is separated from God and damned. It is therefore pointless to preach grace until the impossible demands of the law and the reality of guilt before God are preached." Do you understand? How will we know we are sinners unless we have something that shows us? That's the purpose of the Law; to show us we are imperfect, and we need a perfect Savior.

I've heard it explained by using pain as an analogy. We all have felt pain in some form or another and taken some kind of pain medication to cover it up. Oftentimes, we continue doing the very same activity that hurt us while we're under the influence of the drugs. Although we don't feel it, sometimes we are making the problem worse by masking the pain. The purpose of pain is to warn and protect. When the warning is covered up, it could be bad news. Spiritually speaking, guilt is our God-given warning that tells us we are in sin. We can't ignore it. And the law points out the error of our ways.

The word translated "tutor" or a "custodian" in verse 24 is "paidagogos." This was the Greek word for a "personal slave-attendant employed by Greek or Roman families who accompanied a freeborn boy wherever he went and exercised a certain amount of discipline over him. His function was more like that of a babysitter than a teacher. They took them

to and from school, made sure they did their studies, and taught them obedience. They were very harsh in their discipline, so those placed under their guardianship would yearn for the day of freedom. The role was not permanent, and the boy couldn't wait for final deliverance.

7. How, then, is the Law a tutor, or a custodian?
8. What can happen when you remain under a tutor too long?
9. What role does the Law have in a believer's life? Should a believer still desire to keep the Ten Commandments? How is our motive different than the Judaizers?

In verse 27, Paul's reference to baptism doesn't mean we're saved by water immersion. This would contradict everything he's been saying. This means we are placed into union with Christ and identified as believers, making us part of the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:12-14). Paul says to put on Christ, which may be referring to the Roman ceremony in which the toga of an adult was placed on a young man to declare that he had come of age. We no longer need a tutor because we are of age. Why go back to the childhood Law?

10. According to verse 28, how does faith in Christ bring freedom and unity? God is not prejudiced. He does not see race, sex, or age. Do you?

See you next week! Share this good news with someone this week:

"For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus."
Galatians 3:26