

## Galatians ch 3 vs 1-14

Easter 2000

Let's turn in our bibles to Galatians ch 3 on this Easter morning, and what a significant portion of scripture to find ourselves in during this time that we as believers celebrate the death and resurrection of our Lord. So I didn't feel it necessary to select a different portion of text this morning because it just happens to be that Paul devotes this entire letter in which we've been studying to the defense, and the relevance and significance and really the necessity of the gospel of grace. Which has been given to us so freely by the finished work of the cross of Jesus Christ Because Jesus died to liberate us and to set us free from legalism, to set us free from bondage, to free us from the law of sin and death and this morning as we consider the resurrection, it stands to only validify every promise, and every claim that Jesus Christ ever made.

When Jesus was challenged as to His "credentials" and the Pharisees came and tested Him wanting a sign from Him, He said to them it's a wicked and adulterous generation that seeks after a sign and no sign will be given it except 1. Now Jesus could've said anything, He could've said I'm going to call fire down from heaven and that's the only sign you'll get, He could've said follow me to the red sea boys and after it's parted don't ask Me again I'm not giving you another sign. But He didn't, now the fact is, is that He was giving them signs all the time, in His healings or raising the dead, or in feeding multitudes with next to no food. But even in that He didn't ask you to put your stock in Him because He could work miracles at will, because that in and of its self is not proof that you've been sent from God.

Read Deut ch 13 sometime, Jesus laid everything on the line, all of His integrity, all of His validity everything on 1 sign, the sign of the prophet Jonah. The sign of His death, burial and resurrection, now His disciples He encouraged to believe because of the works sake. But His witness to the world was the resurrection, that's the 1 sign that He submits to you as absolute proof that He is the Son of God and the Savior of the world. That even as Jonah was swallowed up by the great fish, taken to the bottom of the sea or the heart of the earth and then brought back up 3 days later to proclaim God's message to a hurt and dying people.

Even so Jesus would be killed (swallowed up in death) going down into the heart of the earth, preaching peace and comfort to those in Abraham's bosom (1 Pet 3:18,19) and then 3 days later, death being unable to keep Him down. He would rise again in victory defeating death, death now being swallowed up in victory as it is written, "*O Death, where is your sting? O Hades, where is your victory?*" Jesus Christ tasted death so that you and I might have life; He bore our sin that we might bear His righteousness. Jesus said, "*I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in Me, though he may die, he shall live. And whoever lives and believes in Me shall never die. Do you believe this?*"

Let me just tell you from the very get go of this study that that's the same question the Jesus poses today, do you believe it, because all eternity weighs in the balance, the sign of the prophet Jonah. Jesus laid it all on the line prophesying even in advance that He would suffer the death of the cross and on the 3rd day He would rise again. You see He not only prophesied that He would die, because that's not too hard to do. But He prophesied the way He would die, the amount of time His body would lie in the tomb and then (here's the kicker) that He would make a public spectacle of death by defeating death, taking hold of His life and rising again.

So in essence what He was saying is listen, if I don't suffer the specific death of the cross, and if My body doesn't lie in the tomb for specifically 3 days and if on that 3<sup>rd</sup> day you come to the tomb and my body is still there. You can throw everything I've ever said out the window and declare Me the greatest heretic of all time. and I've said it before and I'm about to say it again that's heavy! I can't think of anyone else in the history of mankind that's ever dared make that type of statement, and if they bet me that they could do that I'd take the bet, there's no way. It's *humanly* impossible, that's the whole point Jesus was more than a man, He's God, and if anyone did do that I'd believe anything they told me.

Now in a court of law it takes 2-3 eyewitnesses to establish something as fact and yet we read in 1<sup>st</sup> Cor 15:6 that there were over 500 eyewitnesses to the risen Christ, now what do you do with that? Jesus laid it all on the line with a challenge that's so humanly impossible that only God could do such a thing and He delivered, now the ball is in your court. You can accept Him for all that He said He was, the only begotten Son of God, by which He alone is the access to eternal life.

Jesus said *"I am the way the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by Me."* Or you can reject Him and His love for you, the choice is yours alone, eternity is in the balance and the evidence is overwhelming. Listen, *"For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life."* Peter said, *"Nor is there salvation in any other, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved."*

This is the Gospel that Paul preached to the Galatians, the gospel of the grace of God through the person of Jesus Christ and salvation through Him alone and no work can be added to the work of the cross, that's why we take special note of vs 21 of ch 2 (read) If there was any work of the flesh that could gain you favor in the sight of God, cause Him to accept you and allow you into the Kingdom, then the suffering of His only Son was pointless and God was a fool to let Him suffer and die at the hands of sinful man.

That's why when Jesus was in the garden the night before the crucifixion and He said Father if there be any other way, then let this cup pass from Me. Never the less not as I will but as you will, what does that mean, any other way for what, what cup? If there be any other way by which sinful man could obtain a righteous standing in the sight of the Father other than Him having to drink of the cup of being sacrificed for us. Shedding His blood for the remission of sin, then lets take that route, and if there had been a way, be it through good morals and ethics, be it through the tedious, laborious keeping of the law. Be it through sincerity of heart or whatever that we could've obtained a righteous standing in the sight of God and received the remission of our sin. Then surely God would've taken that route vs allowing His only Son to die the most excruciatingly painful way of capital punishment known to man. But in allowing Jesus to go to the cross, the Father was in fact affirming the fact that there is *no other way* to be reconciled to Him except through His Son. and Yet these Galatians were being deceived into believing that faith in Jesus alone and the finished work of the cross wasn't sufficient to save them, but that they also needed to observe the right of circumcision and keep the law of Moses. and So we find Paul earnestly contending for the truth of the Gospel, that Jesus Christ and Him crucified is all you need to be found righteous in the sight of God.

Vs1

Paul says O foolish Galatians, now this word foolish, in the Greek isn't speaking of a fool in the way that we might be drawn to think at 1<sup>st</sup> glance. Paul's not saying *you blazing idiots whose got you all jacked up, you guys are morons*. That's not where he's going with this, Jesus used this same word when He was speaking to the disciples after He had risen from the dead and was walking with them on the road to Emmaus and they didn't even know that it was Him. It says, "*He said to them, "O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken!"*" Luke 24:25 So this word isn't derogatory concerning their intelligence, one commentator said, "the reference is not so much to a sack of intelligence as to a mistaken use of it." It's used more in the sense of a lack of spiritual perception and discernment, no wisdom when it comes to spiritual matters.

Why, because he's in awe over the fact that they are so soon turning away from the grace of God to a legalistic system of do's and don'ts. Remember we spoke of this astonished grief that Paul expresses over the fact that they are being deceived, he couldn't believe this was happening. That's why he said in ch 1vs 1:6-7 "*I marvel that you are turning away so soon from Him who called you in the grace of Christ, to a different gospel, which is not another; but there are some who trouble you and want to pervert the gospel of Christ.*"

They want to turn the gospel into something entirely different than the truth of what it is and you guys are buying it. Who has bewitched you? and That word bewitched means “mislead” or even “fascinate” in other words how is it that you were fascinated with what these people were telling you such to the point that you were deceived and misled. It’s as though a spell has been cast over you or something; you guys are buying right into it. and It’s heresy, it’s not the truth,

As we’ve said before religion and legalism appeals to the flesh. It gives me a sense of accomplishment so that I can say I’ve done this, therefore I deserve this, I’ve acquired my righteous standing before God because of what I’ve done, or maybe what I haven’t done. and I like that, religion and legalism also allows me to compare and measure myself up to others well one thing is for sure, I may not be perfect but I sure am a lot better than that guy. Because I do this and this, and I sure don’t do that and that, but the reality is that as believers the only one that we are to measure ourselves up against is the person of Jesus Christ and In that we all fall radically short and are humbled before Him and in desperate need of His grace and His mercy.

That’s the difference between legalism and religion vs true Christianity, religion says **Do**, you’ve got to do this and this and then perhaps one day maybe if you strive hard enough you’ll be holy. Every religion in the world has something that you do, Christianity say **Done** religion says work, Christianity says rest. Jesus said, *“Come to Me, all you who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.”* Rest for your weary soul that’s tired of carrying around the burden of sin and shame and guilt Jesus came to liberate you and set you free and the one the Son sets free will be free indeed. But when you begin to get entangled with the mentality of what you need to do and don’t do to be made right in the sight of God apart from simply receiving the washing and cleansing of the blood of Jesus by the grace of God, you’re deceived. You’re bewitched and you’re no longer obeying the truth of the Gospel. (Finish last ½ of vs 1)

In other words when I was with you Paul is saying it couldn’t have been any clearer, that word portrayed even speaks of painting a picture. In other words I laid out the gospel so clearly that you all but seen the crucifixion yourself, how could you have missed the message, the crucified and risen Christ was the message that burned in the heart of Paul the apostle. 1 Cor 15:3-4 *“For I delivered to you first of all that which I also received: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures,”*

Paul preached Jesus Christ and Him crucified for the remission of sin, nothing more and definitely nothing less. 1 Cor 2:2 *“For I determined not to know anything among you except Jesus Christ and Him crucified.”* and Believing in that work of Jesus Christ believing in your heart and confessing with your mouth is all you need to receive a right standing in the sight of God. No work of your flesh is going to add to that which He has already finished and that’s where Paul is headed with this.

Vs2

This question is so powerfully constructed by the Holy Spirit, that he needs nothing else to prove his case, he says this only I want to learn from you. and If you answer this question honestly then you can’t deny the reality of the gospel that you’ve learned that has indeed saved you. (Repeat question) In other words how was it or when was it that the Holy Spirit took up residence in your heart? Was it when you obeyed the meticulous details of the law striving upward to God proving to Him your worthiness to be called His own.

Or was it when you heard that it didn’t matter where you had been or what you had done but that God loved you. He had made a provision to wipe your slate clean of every wrong doing you’ve ever done by the shed blood of Jesus Christ and if you’ll only believe that with all your heart you’ll be born again of the Spirit of God. and Old things, your old life will pass away and all things will be made new in your life like a breath of fresh air and a cool drink of water to your soul. and God’s goodness drew you to repentance, you see again you have to remember that like us the Galatians were a primarily gentile group of believers, being made aware of the Gospel before they ever even heard of the law of God.

So it’s impossible to receive the Spirit by the law if you’ve never even heard the law, and it’s impossible anyway and Paul is going to point that out as we go, no one has ever merited the Spirit of God to be given to them. It’s the gift of God, *“For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast.”* But Jew or Gentile no work of the flesh gains you enough credence in the sight of God for Him to award you with His Spirit. The bible says that *“all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags.”* Isa 64:6 and So the obvious answer to the question is that you receive it not by a work that you have done, but by faith through the grace of God. and Making that point so expressly clear and undeniable that leads Paul to his next question.

Vs3

These are rhetorical questions given with the answer obviously implied, no your not going to perfect the work of the Spirit by the efforts of your flesh. Flesh meaning that sinful nature of ours that wars against the Spirit (Romans ch 7, Gal 5:17) so how can that which wars against the Spirit, perfect the work of the Spirit, it can't happen. Yet so many seek to do this, they receive Jesus Christ and then suddenly they find themselves in bondage to the type of clothing they can and can't wear, or the type of hairstyle they can or can't have. Or they say you're not truly saved until your baptized.

These are the things Paul is talking about, once you've received the Spirit your saved, you don't perfect or complete salvation through baptism. It's simply an outward showing of the inward transformation of my heart and I do it simply out of my love for Jesus Christ wanting to openly proclaim that He's my Lord and I'm His servant. But it's not part 2 of my salvation, my salvation is a 1 step program and it's complete upon my receiving Jesus Christ

Vs4

This word suffer could just as easily been translated as experience, so whether or not he's speaking of persecution for their faith that they may've endured or simply the fact of all of the things that they've experienced in their new life in Christ in uncertain. But what is certain is the question that he asks them, was it all in vain? Was it all for nothing, what was the point of going through ridicule or persecution or even experiencing freedom from bondage and legalism if they were just reverting back to it or falling prey to it now.

Vs5

Same principal here that we seen in vs 2, does God work miracles in our midst because of how good we are and all the good deeds we do? No way, He works the miraculous as an outpouring of His grace. You say but Jeff I've never experienced a miracle, do you know Jesus Christ? If you do then you've experienced a miracle, being born again by the Spirit of God, being called out of darkness into light, out of emptiness into fulfillment is the most miraculous thing that could ever happen in your life. Anything else is just a bonus, but again how do those things happen does God reward your good works by miraculous deeds? No way, you can do nothing to deserve the gracious outpouring of the Spirit of God in a miraculous way in your life; all you can do is receive it by faith according to His sovereign grace as He wills to do a work in your life.

Vs6

Now Paul brings up Abraham, and this is the man that the Jews put all their stock into as far as their spiritual heritage was concerned. and Because Abraham was given the covenant sign of circumcision that it was necessary that anyone claiming the spiritual heritage of Ab had to be circumcised. But what Paul is pointing out here is that if you want to use Ab as an example your free to do that but you should study to show yourself approved unto God and a workman that need not be ashamed rightly dividing the word of truth. Because here Paul is taking them back before the right of circumcision was ever given and some 400yrs before it was ever required by the law to illustrate for them that righteousness in the sight of God has never come any other way but by faith.

He's quoting here from Genesis 15:6 when the Lord brought Ab out of his tent and said take a look up Ab and tell Me what you see? Ab says well I see stars and God said well if you could # them that's how many descendants you're going to have. In other words more than man can count, and it says that Ab believed God and it was accounted to him or imputed to him as righteousness. What was, his obedience to the law, no it didn't exist, his simple belief was credited to his account as righteousness before God. Circumcision was merely a symbol or an outward showing or evidence of that inward belief, as circumcision was to the Jew so baptism is to the Christian. Neither one a means of righteousness or salvation in and of themselves, but both an outward sign of an inward belief and transformation of the heart.

Vs7

It has nothing to do with law or your ethnic background, be it Jew or gentile, if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ then you are considered a son of Ab

Vs8

So some 400- 430 yrs before the law was given God foreshadowed the gospel of justification, not by law and legalism but by faith through His grace not only to the Jews but to the whole world through the person of His Son. How did the blessing of God avail itself to all the nations? Not by law, that was given only to the Jew, by Jesus Christ the righteous dying not only for the Jew but for all the world, anyone who would come to Him through out all of history to receive age abiding life and the remission of sin.

Vs9

So who are those who are blessed of God, who have received the gift and the blessing of eternal life. Those who believe, just like Ab did, righteousness is credited to our account now, just as it was to Abs thousands of yrs ago, by faith.

## Vs10

The law brings a curse because if you don't abide by every single jot and tittle in the law then you become accursed because you've botched up your only chance for righteousness. You see the law isn't a "religious cafeteria" where people can pick and choose which laws they'll abide by and which ones they won't. You either abide by it all or you're guilty of breaking it all and worthy of the penalty of eternal death and separation from God in suffering and torment. You say well that's not fair, I live by the 10 commandments, that's neat that's 10, but unfortunately there's hundreds of laws.

Speaking of the 10 commandments lets see how you do, ever desire something that your neighbor has, you've coveted that's one broke, ever look on another person with lust in your heart (don't answer that, that's 2 down). Ever get angry with someone such to the point that you wish they'd just drop off the face of the planet? Or your in a hurry but the guy in front of you won't speed and you just get insanely mad at them, according to Jesus you've murdered them in your heart, that's 3 down. Have you ever in your life taken something that didn't belong to you even if it was just a piece of gum or a pen or pencil, there's 4 down. Have you ever lied, that's bearing false witness, 5 down and we could go on, but for times sake we won't. and Every one of the 10 commandments have a penalty of death when violated, you're under the curse if you want to be justified by works or the law. and That's just the 10 commandments, when is the last time you kept the feast of the in gathering? The what, that's my point.

If you had 10 laws that were capital offenses and I just committed 1 of them I couldn't appeal to the judge on the basis of the fact that I had kept 9 so I'm really not that bad. All I did was murder I didn't rape or steal or whatever, the judge is going to say you missed the point son, you broke the law and you're getting your just reward of death. So if you don't want your just reward based on the law you're ear should be inclined toward the gospel of grace found in Jesus Christ that I'm sharing with you this morning. Again quoting from the O.T Habakkuk 2:4, you see even those who were under O.T law who understood the heart of God knew that no man was justified in the sight of God by keeping the law.

Then what's the point of the law? You'll have to tune in next week, we'll address that then, but those who are justified in the sight of God, those who are looked at just as if I'd never sinned at all are those who live by faith in Jesus Christ

## Vs12-13

This word “redeemed” is the word used to describe the purchasing of a slave with the express purpose of setting him free, no strings attached.

We were born slaves, slaves to the law of sin and death born into a curse, but Jesus became a curse for us in order to purchase us by the price of His blood in order that we might be set free from sin and experience liberty in Him. and We just studied this a couple weeks ago in Duet ch 21vs 23, and we recognize the ultimate fulfillment of that particular law and really every law was found in Jesus Christ Jesus took our curse upon Himself why?

## Vs14

As I said earlier Jesus tasted death that we might have life, He bore out sin that we might receive His righteousness, He was forsaken by God, that we might become the friends of God. He became poor that we might inherit His riches, and He bore the curse, that we might inherit the blessing of eternal life, but you can only receive it by faith. and This morning as we consider the death and resurrection of our Lord and all that He accomplished by the work of the cross, He was put to death for our sin and raised for our justification.

I want to invite you to step out in faith and receive that justification to place your trust in Jesus Christ and receive the remission of your sin and inherit eternal life. Maybe you came here this morning thinking you were doing your annual Easter duty, or a friend bugged you so much that you came to get them off your back. But you’re beginning to realize that we’re all here by divine appointment and that God has purposed from before the foundations of the earth that you would be here this morning so that He might introduce Himself to you and give you rest for your weary soul.

Maybe you’re here doing your “religious duty” but the Lord is calling you to surrender your legalistic approach to Him and enter into a love relationship with Him. Not asking God to bless you based upon how good you’ve done, but Lord I could never merit your blessing in my life. But God out of Your grace and mercy I want to ask you to bless my life and teach me what it means to walk not in a legalistic relationship with you but a love relationship with you. I probably live a stricter life now then I ever have, but it isn’t because I have to, I can do whatever I want, but I choose not to because I love the Lord and I desire an intimate relationship with Him. *Isa 59:1-2 Behold, the LORD's hand is not shortened, That it cannot save; Nor His ear heavy, That it cannot hear. But your iniquities have separated you from your God; And your sins have hidden His face from you.*” and Maybe this morning God is calling you to receive that washing and cleansing of your heart and mind that you might enter into either a 1<sup>st</sup> time relationship with Him. Or maybe a renewed or deeper level of intimacy with Him so before we partake of communion together lets pray and seek the Lord that we might be found right in His sight by the precious blood of His Son.