

# By Believing What You Heard

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[ 0 : 00 ] Well, this past fall, I guess, leading into Christmas here, we've been journeying together through the story of Abraham. We've been looking at it from a number of different angles.

It began seemingly a little bit as just the story of one man, Abraham. But as we looked at it a little more, we began to see that this is about more than just Abraham.

This is God's story. This is about more than just one man. This is about the children, the offspring that he has promised to Abraham, and not just promised to him, but promised to bless as a gift of grace.

And we've been seeing that it's more than just for his family, that God is actually doing something much bigger through this, that this is the story of how he plans to bless the world through this one man.

We're going to continue looking at his life, his story. This morning, we're looking at it through a little bit of a different lens, through the lens of the Apostle Paul in his letter to the church in the region of Galatia.

[ 1 : 10 ] If you have your Bible with you, please open it up to Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. This is a very unique letter that the Apostle Paul has penned.

It's to a whole number of churches in the region of Galatia. And more than any of, I think, of his letters, there's quite the tone in this letter.

There's quite the passion in this letter. There's quite the concern in this letter. We hear the heart of a shepherd who sees the sheep of Christ being threatened by wolves.

What's going on in the churches in the region of Galatia? Paul, after his initial greetings, gets right down to business.

He says, I'm concerned that there is a false gospel that has kind of leaked into your churches. There are some who are promoting it.

[ 2 : 16 ] There are some who are telling you some things. And it's completely wrong. It goes completely against the good news of what Jesus has done for you.

And there's a sense of fearfulness, angst in Paul's heart that this may be something that would draw Christ's sheep away from him.

And so he writes very passionately to address and correct this. Who's responsible for this false gospel? Paul refers to them in the beginning of his letter as those who are throwing them into confusion and trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

In chapter 2, verse 15, he kind of refers to them a little bit there as those who are Jewish by birth. And what is this false gospel that they are preaching, that they're teaching?

It's that if you want to be saved, if you want to be right with God and receive his gift, his blessing, you need Jesus plus you need to observe the law that came through Moses.

[ 3 : 37 ] You need to be circumcised. You need to observe the Jewish customs. You need to observe special days and months and years.

It's Jesus plus law keeping or the works of the law. And Paul is writing with all the passion that he has to help them see that this is off.

This is wrong. This is dangerous. We pick it up in chapter 3, verse 1. You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?

Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 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? Are you so foolish?

[ 4 : 39 ] After beginning by means of the spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain?

If it really was in vain. 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's first question kind of sets the tone. Who has bewitched you? Who has deceived you? Who's got into your head and convinced you of lies, of things that are off?

Before your very eyes, Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. When we came through the region of Galatia, we made known to you the gospel of Jesus Christ, the good news that he was crucified.

And I think this is not all that they proclaim. This is just kind of short form for it. That he was crucified for the forgiveness of your sins so that you could be made right with God.

[ 5 : 49 ] And receive the gift of eternal life by faith. It's all implied there. We made that clear right at the beginning. Let me ask you a question, he says.

That cuts right to the heart of this whole matter. I want to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the spirit? The spirit of God.

By works of the law. By law keeping. By picking up the book of the law and looking at what was written in there and starting to do it.

Is that how you received the spirit of God when we came? Or did you receive it by believing what you heard? By believing the news that Christ was crucified for you.

This is Paul's big point. This is his big question. So much so that he says it again. Almost the same question down in verse 5.

[ 6 : 54 ] 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?

This time he pulls in another aspect. Work miracles among you. Those of you who have read the book of Acts know that as the gospel spread out from Jerusalem.

God confirmed that the word was true in many different places through miracles. Through signs. When the gospel went cross-cultural. When it went to the Samaritans. The Samaritans saw miracles. And so they knew. They had confirmation that what the apostles were saying was true. You might remember when Cornelius. A Gentile and his family. Had that conversation with Peter. Miracles. They were confirmation.

[ 7 : 58 ] That yes. God is giving this gift. Of salvation. To the Gentiles. Paul is pointing back to that. When we rolled through Galatians.

When we came. Through the region of Galatia. You saw. God worked miracles among you. By his spirit. You received his spirit.

Then you witnessed those things. Did that come about or happen? Because you decided. We are going to keep the law. We are going to do the things that the law.

That came through Moses requires. Or did it happen. Simply because you believed. What you heard. That Christ was crucified for you. And of course.

Paul knows the answer to his question. He is making the point. He is not really asking the question. He is making the point. You received the spirit of God. You were saved.

[ 8 : 58 ] You were made right with God. By believing. What Christ did for you. Not by. Doing something for God.

God. And to help us. See just how. How true this is. Paul goes back. To the story of Abraham. The story that we have been looking at.

And I think the reason why. If I am. If I am really hearing Paul. Here in this passage. There is a reason why. He goes back to Abraham. And I think that comes through.

In verse 7. So we will skip 6. We will come back to it. But we will go to 7. Paul says this. He says. Understand then. That those who have faith. Are children.

Of Abraham. Are children of Abraham. That is what. This is really about. Who are the children. Of Abraham. Literally the sons of Abraham.

[ 10 : 00 ] Who are the sons of Abraham. That is at the heart. Of this issue. With these people. Who are teaching. This false gospel. We are Jewish by birth.

We are circumcised. We are children. Of Abraham. And if you want. To be children. Of Abraham. If you want. To inherit. The blessing of God.

And what God has promised. You need Jesus. Plus. You need these other things too. You need to keep the law. You need to be circumcised.

You need to be circumcised. Who are the children. Of Abraham. You might remember. That on a couple occasions. John the Baptist.

And Jesus. Came up against. This idea. This attitude. It was stated this way. We have Abraham. As our father.

[10:56] Many of the Jewish people. Took great pride in this. Who are you. To tell us. That we need to repent. That. That we need to turn. From our sins. And.

God has a problem. With us. We have Abraham. As our father. We have. The promises. Of blessing. And Jesus. Pushed back on that.

John the Baptist. Pushed back on that. And challenged that. Whether or not. They were. True. Sons of Abraham. Abraham. And so. Paul is going.

Back to Abraham. To make it crystal clear. Who are the children. Of Abraham. Verse six. So also. Abraham.

And he quotes. Genesis 15. Six. Which we've said. Many times. In the past. Number of weeks. So also. Abraham. Believed God. And it was credited. To him.

[11:50] As righteousness. Abraham. Lacked. A right standing. With God. He was a sinner. Just like all of us. And God credited. A right standing.

To Abraham. A right standing. With himself. To Abraham. On account. Of his. Believing. The promises. That God.

Had made. When he says. So also. Or just as. The point. That he's making. Is. Is simply this. Abraham. Got a right standing.

With God. God. On account. Of his faith. In what he heard. From God. And it works. The exact same way. For all of us.

Today. We get a right standing. With God. Not by. Doing works. Of the law. But by believing. What we have heard. The good news.

[12:45] The gospel. Of Jesus Christ. Abraham. Didn't even have. Opportunity. To do the works. Of the law. The law. Hadn't even. Come yet. Before God.

Gave him. Anything. To do. Or commands. Or requirements. God. Made a covenant. With him. He gave him. Promises. Abraham.

Believed. That God. Would do. What he said. He would do. And it was. On the basis. Of that faith. That God. Gave him. A right standing.

With himself. And treated him. As righteous. It's the same. For us. Is the point. That Paul is making. The children.

Of Abraham. Verse seven. Are those. Who have faith. They're those. Who believe. Understand.

[13:40] Then. That. Those who have faith. Are sons. Of Abraham. What about. The whole. Jew versus. Gentile.

Thing. Though. How does that. Factor into it. I mean. It must factor. Into it. Somehow. Paul goes on. To address this. In verse eight. He says. Scripture.

Forsaw. That God. Would justify. The Gentiles. By faith. And announce. The gospel. In advance. To Abraham. All nations.

Will be blessed. Through you. So those. Who rely. On faith. Are blessed. Along with. Abraham. The man. Of faith. Scripture.

Forsaw. Says Paul. He kind of. Personifies. Scripture. There. What God. Said. Long ago. To Abraham. Looks ahead.

[14:33] To something. That he had planned. And intended. To do. All along. And what was that? That God. Would. Justify. The Gentiles. By faith. The word.

Gentiles. Is literally. The word. Nations. In Greek. That God. Would. Justify. The nations. By faith. This was God's.

Plan. All along. And what he said. Pointed. To that. Future. Reality. When he said. To Abraham. All nations. Will be blessed.

Through you. All the families. Of the earth. Will be blessed. Through you. You will be the father. Of a multitude. Of nations. What was that.

Pointing to? Paul tells us. By the. By the Holy Spirit. Under his inspiration. That that was pointing. To the future reality. That one day. People from. Among the nations.

[15:28] Would be blessed. Would receive. The. The favor of God. Would receive. A right standing. With God. In the same way. That Abraham did.

By faith. By believing. What they would hear. The good news. Of Jesus Christ. So those. Who rely. On faith. Are blessed. Along. With Abraham. The man of faith. God intended. All along. To show favor.

To the nations. And his point. Here is simply this. If you have faith. In. And it's implied. That this faith. Is in the gospel. Of Jesus Christ.

That's the context. Of all that he's saying. In this letter. It's not just faith. In anything. If you have faith. In the son of God. Jesus Christ.

[16:21] And what he has done. For you. Then you. Are. A son of Abraham. You are. One of his children. You will be blessed.

Along with Abraham. The man of faith. Verse nine. In verse 10. Paul goes on. To make the point clear.

From a different angle. What about that way. Of the law. And the works of the law. What about that? He says. 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. Clearly. No one who relies on the law. Is justified. Before God. What is he saying there?

[17:21] He's saying. If you. If you want to. Talk about the law. The way of the law. You want to look at the law. You want to look to that. To find a right standing. With God. And.

And obeying that. And keeping the commands. This is how. That path. Works itself out. He says. Those who.

Who. Who look to that path. And walk that path. Or try to walk that path. They're under a curse. They're under a curse. What do you mean Paul?

He quotes. From the law itself. Cursed is everyone. Who does not continue. To do everything. Written. In the book of the law. When the law was given.

It was given. Like a. A covenant. The Lord had half of the people of Israel. Stand on one hill. And half stand on another hill. One half of them.

[18:17] Proclaimed the blessings. Blessings that they would receive. If they obeyed. The law. The other half. Proclaimed. The curses. The curses.

The judgment. The punishment. That they would receive. From God. If they. Disobeyed the law. And broke the law. That's how it was set up.

And the very last curse. That's listed in this list of curses. That they recited. Is what Paul quotes here. Cursed. Is everyone. Who does not continue.

To do everything. Written. In the book. Of the law. They spoke those words aloud. They entered into this covenant.

With the Lord. What does Paul say. In verse 11. The conclusion. Of all this. Clearly. No one. Who relies on the law.

[19:15] Is justified. Before God. Is made right. With God. How can they be. Because no one. Has been able. To live. According to the law. Well enough.

To keep everything. Written in the law. We've failed. That way. Doesn't lead to life. It leads. To death. Judgment.

Punishment. And it's deserved. Because we have broken. God's law. No.

That's not the way. That's not the way. To a right standing. With God. God. What is the way. Verse 11.

Because. The righteous. Will live by faith. This was an interesting one. As I was looking at it this week. Because it didn't exactly mean.

[20:11] What I thought it did. This is. This comes from the book of. Habakkuk. Habakkuk was a prophet. It. And. He declared. To the people of Israel. That God's judgment. Was coming upon Israel.

For their disobedience. And their wickedness. And even as he did. He declared. That the Babylonians. Were going to come. And conquer them. And take them away. Into captivity. Even as he declared that.

He protested it. Lord. How will you. Allow them. To do such treacherous things. To your people. God goes on. In that book.

To say. I'm not going to let them. Get away with. The evil things. That they. They've done either. They too. Are going to face. Justice. But in the. In the.

Larger picture. Of the Babylonians. Coming and. Executing. My judgment. Upon the people of Israel. The righteous.

[ 21 : 07 ] Will live. By faith. And I think. The sense there. Is very much. The righteous. Will. Be. Spared. They will have.

Life. Not because of. They have lived. Good enough. But on account. Of their faith. In me. Their real faith. In me. The righteous.

Will live. On account. Of their faith. Not because. They're actually. Righteous. Not because. They've lived. Good enough. But because. That's the way.

That God. Has chosen. To. Give. Righteousness. To some. Paul says. The law. Verse 12.

Is not based. On faith. On the contrary. It says. The person. Who does. These things. Will live. By them. The law. Is not based. On faith. There's.

[ 22 : 05 ] There's. There's. Probably. The best way. To think. To think. Of this. Is in terms. Of covenant. There's. There's. Two different. Covenants. Here. The covenant. That God.

Gave. Through Moses. This was. Kind of. A. God. Will treat. You. This way. If you. Obey. Him. God. Will. Treat. You. This way.

If you. Disobey. Him. It was. Kind of. A contractual. Kind of. Covenant. Not. Based. On. Faith. But. Based. On. Deeds. Based.

On. Works. That's. The kind. Of. Covenant. That. It was. Whoever. Does. These. Things. Will. Have. Life. Will. Will. Live. By.

Them. And. The message. That Paul. Is. Is. Trying. To. Communicate. Here. Is. That. We. Have. Not. Lived. We. We. Do. Not. Have. Life.

[ 22 : 56 ] Because. We. Have. Not. Done. These. Things. We. Have. Failed. To. Do. Them. And. We. Can't. Live. Up. To. The. Standard. Of. God's. Holy. Law. No.

There's. Another. Kind. Of. Covenant. And. It's. The. Covenant. That. God. Made. With. Abraham. It's. Not. A. Covenant. Based. On. What. We. Do. Based. On. Works. It's. A. Covenant. Based. On. Faith. The. Heart. Of. It. Was. Simply. That. God. Made. Promises. He. Swore. By. Himself. To. Uphold. Them.

And. It. Wasn't. Based. On. What. Abraham. Had. To. Do. At. All. Abraham's. Side. Of. The. Abrahamic. Covenant. Was. Simply. To. Trust. And.

Believe. And. I. Think. That's. What. Paul's. Pointing. To. Here. There's. Two. Different. Ways. If. You. Will. To. Think. About. How. We. Get. A. Right. Standing. With. God. But. This.

[ 23 : 48 ] One. The. Way. Of. The. Law. It. Doesn't. Work. It. Leads. To. Condemnation. And. Judgment. And. To. The. To. Punishment. Of.

The. The. Curse. That. We. Deserve. For. Breaking. The. Law. This. Way. Is. The. Way. That. Works. And. The. Way. That. God. Has. Pointed. Us. To. Throughout. His. Word.

Starting. With. Abraham. The. Way. Of. Faith. The. Way. Of. Trust. The. Way. Of. Believing. Like. Abraham. Did. That. God. Would. Supply.

The. Sacrifice. That. Was. Needed. The. Lamb. That. Was. Needed. For. The. Sacrifice. For. His. Sins. His.

Point. In. All. This. Is. To. Say. And. We're. Going. To. Look. At. This. A. Little. Bit. More. Next. Week. In. The. Verses. That. Follow. The. Law. Cannot. Give. Life. It. Cannot.

[ 24 : 41 ] Guarantee. Life. Because. Nobody. Can. Do. It. Well. Enough. To. Be. Considered. Righteous. Before. God. But.

There's. Good. News. Paul. Proclaims. The. Good. News. Verse. 13. We.

All. We. All. Stand. Under. This. Curse. Of. The. Law. I. Was. Trying. To. Wrestle. Through. This. And. Understand. It. Yes. It. Was. The. Israelites. That. That. That. Entered. Into. This.

Covenant. But. What. The. Law. Says. It. Says. To. Those. Who. Are. Under. The. Law. So. That. The. Whole. World. Might. Know. The. Truth. Behind. The. Law. That. We. Are. All.

For. Punishment. For. Judgment. For. Wrath. We. All. Deserve. This. Curse. This. Curse. Is. Upon. All. Of. Us. But. There's. Good. News. Says.

[ 25 : 47 ] Paul. Christ. Redeemed. Us. From. The. Curse. Of. The. Law. He. Got. Us. Out. From. Underneath.

It. He. He. Rescued. Us. From. It. He. Freed. Us. From. The. Curse. For. Breaking. The. Law. And. How. Did. He. Do. It. By. Becoming. A. Curse. For. Us. By. Becoming. A. Curse. For. Us. That's. Kind of. Strange. Language. To. Us. It. Doesn't. Sound. Quite. Right. What do you. Mean. He. Became. A. Curse. For. Us. Paul. Goes. On. To. Explain. For. It. Is. Written. Cursed. Is. Everyone. Who. Is. Hung. On. A. Pole. Now. As. I've. Read. That. In. The. Past. I've. Thought. What.

[ 26 : 39 ] Is. He. Saying. Cursed. Is. Everyone. Who. Is. Hung. On. A. Pole. Is. This. Kind of. Like. A. Divine. Omen. You know. Like. Anybody. Who. Walks. Under. A. Ladder. Is. Gonna. Have. Bad. Luck.

For. The. Whole. Day. But. The. More. I. Looked. Into. It. I. Started. To. See. How. These. Pieces. Fit. Together. Back. In. The. Old. Testament. If. You. Were. Put. To. Death. It. Was. Because. You. Committed. A. Capital. Offense. You. You. Broke. God's. Law. In. One. Of. Those. Manners. That. Is. Worthy. Of. Death. According. To. The. Lord. You. Were. Put. To. Death. And. They. Hung. The. Body. Up. On. A. Pole. On. A. On. A. Wooden. Stake. And. They.

Took. The. Body. Down. At. Sunset. But. Until. They. Did. That. Body. Was. Up. There. Kind. Of. As. An. Outward. Sign. That. This. Person. Was. Under. God's. Curse.

[ 27 : 33 ] They. Had. Now. Think. About. That. In. Terms. Of. Christ.

What. Is. Paul. Saying. Here. That. Jesus. Became. A. Curse. For. Us. He. Saying. That. As. He. Hung. There. On. The. Cross. Dead.

It. Was. An. Outward. Sign. That. That. Some. People. Would. Look. At. And. Say. That. Man. Is. Under. God's. Curse. He.

Must. Have. Something. Terrible. But. What. Does. It. Say. It. Says. He.

Became. A. Curse. For. Us. Literally. In. Behalf. Of. Us. This.

[ 28 : 27 ] Is. The. Heart. Of. The. Gospel. Christ. Got. Us. Out. From. Underneath. The. Judgment. That. We. Deserve. By.

Going. Under. That. Judgment. Himself. And. Receiving. What. The. Law. Said. That. Those. Who. Break. The. Law. Deserve. He.

Was. Hung. On. A. Tree. And. It's. A. Profound. Mystery. Some.

People. Saw. Him. On. That. Tree. And. The. Conclusion. They. Came. To. Was. The. Wrong. One. He's. Not. The. Messiah. Because. If. he. was. He. wouldn't.

Be up there. That's a symbol. That he's. That he is. Cursed. That he has fallen under the curse of God. That he's broke the law. Even.

[ 29 : 23 ] That. That. That. That very attitude. Was. Spoken. About. Long. Ago. By. The. Prophet. Isaiah. We. Considered. him. Punished. By. God. Stricken.

By. Him. And. Afflicted. But. He. Was. Pierced. For. Our. Transgressions. He.

Was. Crushed. For. Our. Iniquities. The punishment that brought us peace was upon him. And by. His wounds.

We. Are. Healed. Christ. Became. A. curse. He bore. The. curse. He satisfied the demands of the law.

For us. On our. Behalf. So that we could go free. So that we could be. Redeemed. From that obligation.

[ 30 : 23 ] To the law. Of God. The good news is this. We don't have to. Do the works of the law.

To get a right standing with God. Christ has already done. What the law requires. Christ has already done it. He. He bore the curse.

The judgment of God. On our behalf. And Paul's point here. Is that we get a right standing with God. On the basis of what Christ has done. And it's a gift.

By believing. What you heard. About what he has done. Verse 14. He redeemed us. In order that. The blessing. Given to Abraham. Might come to the Gentiles. Through or in. Christ Jesus. So that by faith. We might receive.

[ 31 : 22 ] The promise. Of the spirit. There was something. In the way. Of Abraham. And his offspring. Receiving what was promised.

And of the nations. Receiving. What has been promised. Sin. Our obligation. To God's law. But Christ has come.

And taken care of all of that. When he hung on the tree. He bore the curse. He took the wrath. On the positive side. He said. I have come to fulfill the law.

The obedience. The law requires. Jesus has done it. And now the blessing. Is guaranteed. And can flow. Not just. To the physical descendants.

Of Abraham. Who have faith. But also. Paul says. To the Gentiles. In. Christ Jesus. So that by faith. [ 32 : 20 ] We might receive. The promise. The gift. A right standing with God. The Holy Spirit. Of God himself. To live in us.

With us. Jesus died on that cross. But he didn't stay dead. This passage is not about the resurrection.

But he didn't stay dead. He was raised back to life from the dead. And he has been greatly exalted. And he will be greatly exalted. For who he is.

And what he has done. For his people. And so what do we do. With this passage. This passage. Is not really about what we do. It's about. What Christ has done for us. If there is one thing. That we. That we can do here.

[ 33 : 16 ] If you. Are here this morning. And you do not believe. You do not belong to Jesus. And you know it.

Paul is calling us here. To stop trying. To. Earn. A right standing with God. By doing good works. It can't be done.

God wants to give you. A right standing with himself. As a free gift. Because of what Christ has done. And all you need to do. Is believe that.

To receive it. It's free. It cost him. A lot. It cost him everything. But for us. It's free.

For those of us who do believe. What do we need to do. In light of this. We've been talking about it in Colossians.

[ 34 : 15 ] And Paul says it here. Don't listen. To anybody. Who says. That in order to have a right standing with God. In order to. To have the full blessing.

That God. Has promised to his people. You need Jesus. Plus. Fill in the blank. No. You need Jesus. Period. We've been talking about this in Sunday school. See to it. That no one takes you captive. Through hollow. And deceptive philosophy.

Which depends on human tradition. And the basic principles of this world. Rather than on Christ. For in Christ. All the fullness of deity. Lives in bodily form.

And in Christ. What? You. Have been brought. To fullness. All of the blessing of God. Comes to his people. Through.

[ 35 : 11 ] Jesus. He's won it all for us. We don't need to go back. To the Mosaic law. We don't need to. To. To be circumcised. We don't need to observe.

Jewish festivals. And traditions. It's Jesus. Period. We don't need to have certain. Spiritual experiences. We don't need to have certain.

Manifestations. Of God's spirit. In us. Or gifts. Or phenomenon. Or things that. That happen. In order to have a right standing. With God. And to receive his full blessing. We need Christ.

And Christ alone. We're going to. Talk about. More about some of these things.

Next Sunday. As we continue the rest of the passage. I'm going to leave it there. Let's. Let's pray together. Father in heaven.

[ 36 : 11 ] Thank you so much. For sending your son. To die for us. Lord. It's hard to believe. In one sense.

That you. The Lord of glory. Would come down. And be put up on a pole. On a cross. Like that. Where people would. Would think.

That you were under God's curse. For your own sins. Such shame. And scorn. You bore. And it's our. It was because of our sins.

Thank you. That you loved us like that. You're an amazing God. We've never seen a love like that. Anywhere else. That's why we worship.

That's why we praise you. That's why we sing. In Christ's name. We pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen.

[ 37 : 09 ] Amen. Amen. Amen.