

By Faith We Are Justified

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- [0 : 0 0] Well, good morning everyone. Welcome to service this morning. Just sitting there this morning thinking of counting our blessings and being thankful.
- How are we enjoying our summer holidays? Are we enjoying this warm weather? Are we enjoying the sun that we have this morning?
- Or are we maybe grumbling a little bit about the heat and about sun? You know, we want perfect conditions all the time, right? And yet, God has given us what we have and we are to be thankful for it.
- We have the children of Israel in the Old Testament. We know what happens if there is continual grumbling, right? And so, let's truly count our blessings and praise God for all that He gives us.
- Thank you as well for the children's story this morning. It fits in with the message that we need to have our eyes focused on Christ and to follow in His footsteps.
- [1 : 2 8] If we venture out of Christ's footsteps, there are so many traps, so many dangers awaiting us. And so, we need to be focused on our Lord and Savior and follow in His steps.
- And thank you as well, Johnny, for reading the scriptures for us this morning. It's been a little while since we've been in Galatians. Started out with that early in the year and was thinking about it yesterday.
- I think the last time that we were in Galatians was back in March. So, it's a few months ago and so I thought we should probably just do a quick review of the first two chapters.
- We've looked at chapters 1 and 2. And so, the book of Galatians, an epistle or a letter written to the churches of Galatia.
- Chapter 1, verse 2 tells us. And so, Galatia was a Roman province. Galatians, and the churches that Paul is writing to, just picked out a few of the churches.
- [2 : 4 5] I'm not sure of all of them, but some of the churches that he would have been writing to would have been to Antioch, to Iconium, to Lystra and Derbe. So, a few of the churches that he was writing to, so in that region.
- Today, it is in the province. What used to be the province of Galatia is in modern-day Turkey. And so, it's a letter written by Paul to the churches of Galatia addressing issues in the church.
- There were false teachers coming in, and they were teaching a different gospel than the one the churches had started out with.
- And they were attacking Paul. They were discrediting his apostleship. They were trying to persuade the people that Paul was maybe a self-appointed apostle, or one who had been, who was going along.
- It was by man-made appointment. And, you know, possibly by the other apostles in Jerusalem, the apostles, the disciples who had walked with Christ.

- [4 : 00] And so, Paul defends against that in chapter 1, that, you know, he'd been in the ministry for a number of years before he ever went to Jerusalem and met any of the other apostles.
- And so, he defends his apostleship. And then, as it moves into chapter 2, he is defending the gospel as well.
- And one of the issues that he mentions in chapter 2 is circumcision. So, works of the flesh. Circumcision was one example of the issues within the church. And so, what these false teachers were doing is they were teaching that faith alone was not sufficient for salvation. There had to be more than faith. And so, that they were bringing in the teaching that the works of the law must be observed as well. And we see in chapter 2, Paul picks on the apostle Peter in regards to this.
- [5 : 15] Peter is not going around. He's not a false teacher going around teaching that the works of the law must be observed as well as having faith.
- And yet, his actions are hypocritical. As he comes to these churches in Galatia, he will go and eat meals together with the Gentiles.
- But if Jews show up, he separates from the Gentiles. And he goes and sits somewhere else in the Jews with him. And so, there was that division, that separation between Jew and Gentile. It was still there.
- And so, Paul speaks up on that. He shares how he confronted Peter about that. And so, then as we move into chapter 3 this morning, Paul reproves the Galatians.
- And as well as gives proof that justification is by faith. And so, this morning I do have two main points.
- [6 : 25] And that is first to look a little bit at Paul's reproving of the Galatians. And then the second point, proving that justification is by faith.
- And I have a few sub-points under that. And so, I titled my message this morning, By Faith We Are Justified. So, let's look at verses 1 through 4 to begin with.
- O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?
- This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?
- Have you suffered so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain. So, Paul here, he's established his apostleship and he's defended the gospel.
- [7 : 40] And so, he's reestablished that authority that he has the authority to call these people out and to question them and to correct them.
- And so, he has a hard time understanding what these believers in these churches of Galatia are falling for. You know, he's seen them respond to the gospel and he's seen them step out in faith.
- You know, he, on his first missionary journey, he traveled through these regions. He established these churches. He started them up. And so, I'm pretty sure he would have spent enough time there to ensure that they had a solid foothold in the gospel, that they were moving in the right direction before he would move on.
- And so, to hear that only a few years later, it's only a handful of years since he had been there.
- It's thought that Galatians is one of the first letters of the New Testament to be written. And either in the, most likely in the early, the early 50s.

- [8 : 58] And so, it's only been, I don't know, five, between four to six years after he had established these churches that he is writing the letter to the Galatians.
- And so, it's only a very few years and they are in danger of drifting away from the truth and falling for this false teaching.
- And so, it's concerning to Paul. And so, he writes this letter to them to bring correction, to address these issues. And he uses some strong words as he addresses them.
- He says, O foolish Galatians, are you completely void of understanding? Do you really not have a clue? Who has bewitched you?
- And so, the definition for bewitched is to be fascinated or charmed or to be under the spell of something or someone. So, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?
- [10 : 08] And so, he's wondering what kind of spell has been cast on you that you cannot see through these lies.
- You know the truth. You understood that Jesus came and he was crucified for your sins. You had this clear. I've taught you this.
- You understood it. You accepted it. You received the Spirit. You stepped out in faith. And so, how can you be so easily convinced otherwise? And then he has this real question for them to cause them to think, This only I want to learn from you.
- Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? And I think the Galatians knew the answer to that question.
- And Paul knew that they did as well. And so, as he's writing this letter, he must have, as he was, his thoughts were coming to his mind as he's writing, He asked this question and there may have been a slight pause.
- [11 : 27] And then he just continues with another question in verse 3. Do you think that these teachings that are being presented to you, that they will perfect you?
- Are you going to be a better Christian for believing these teachings, for adding the works of the law to faith?
- Is that the perfect way of doing it? Is that the best way? And so, Paul puts these questions to them to cause them to think and to consider when and how they came to faith.
- To remember the day that they received the Holy Spirit. It wasn't that long ago. They would have remembered that day and that moment.
- What had caused them to receive the Spirit? The works of the law or the moral law was written on their hearts.
- [12 : 48] We find that in the book of Romans that all mankind has the moral law written on his heart. That had been with them the whole time.
- They hadn't received the Spirit. In that state, you know, by following the law. So what had been the cause for them to receive the Spirit?
- It was when they had believed on the Lord Jesus as their personal Savior that the Spirit entered them. There were no works involved.
- It was by faith alone. And that still holds true today as well. The only way to receive the Spirit is to accept Jesus as our personal Lord and Savior by faith.
- It is the only way. And when we do that, God the Father sends us the Spirit as a guarantee that we are his purchased possession.
- [13 : 58] And we have a couple references to that in Scripture as well in Ephesians 1.13 as well as 2 Corinthians 1.22.
- Speaking of how God sends us the Spirit as a guarantee or as a seal. And so we face the same issues today as the Galatians did.

I don't think much has changed. If anything, it may be getting worse. False teachings, they're still a thing today.

There's many versions of the Gospel out there. And so we need to be discerning. How do they measure up to Scripture?

So there's many ways that we can take in these messages. And so to be discerning, to be careful on what we take in, to recognize false teaching for what it is.

[15 : 09] And to not get caught up in that. You know, another thing that the Galatians were dealing with, that we deal with as well, is traditions.

You know, what works are we clinging to as part of our salvation? We all have different upbringings, different things that get handed down and passed along from generation to generation.

And they tend to take root. And we kind of get in this rut that, you know, this is what we've been taught. This is how we can remember it for as long as we can remember.

It's been passed down. This is like Gospel. We have to continue in this. You know, traditions are okay.

They are fine. It is good to have traditions as long as we don't turn those traditions into musts for salvation.

[16 : 16] We cannot go there. And so, just one question that came to my mind, you know, as we observe others around us as well, and we view them in the light of our upbringing, our traditions, you know, are we quick to consider someone a non-believer for not doing certain things that we have been taught to observe?

So, in the traditions that we have been brought up in, as we view someone else who's been brought up differently than we have, and, oh, they're not doing this or they're not doing that, I'm pretty sure that's not a believer.

You know, we have to be very careful in that. Justification, you know, being saved, it is by faith alone.

The good works will follow. They are an evidence of it, and yet our traditions are not what saves us.

And so, from there, Paul goes forward and he begins proving that justification is by faith.

[17 : 40] The rest of our passage this morning, we'll look at that. So, I'll begin with verses 5 through 9. And Paul is using Abraham as an example of justification by faith.

So, verse 5. Therefore, he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

Just as Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness, Therefore, know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, In you all the nations shall be blessed.

So then, those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. So, Paul begins here in verse 5 by just repeating his question from verse 2.

[18 : 53] In verse 2, This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? And so, that question is repeated here in verse 5.

And it can be repeated here for us this morning as well. He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith?

God's program of spreading the gospel, it is going forward to this day. As long as we are in this age, it is a continual thing.

The gospel is going forward. And so, in what manner is it going forward? Is the gospel being spread by the works of the law?

Or is it being spread by faith? It is very evident that it is by faith alone.

[20 : 01] And so, from there, Paul, he brings it right back to Abraham. To the man that God made a covenant with.

Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Therefore, know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, In you all the nations shall be blessed.

So then, those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. So why did God make a covenant with Abraham?

It is because Abraham believed God. And his belief in God is what was accounted to him for righteousness.

[21 : 03] I thought we should go back to that in Genesis chapter 15. God makes the promise to Abraham in chapter 12.

And then in chapter 15, we have we have that again.

It's brought up, at least in part. And so, just to get the context, I thought we'd read from verses 1 through 5. Genesis 15.

So after these things, the word of the Lord came to Abraham in a vision, saying, Do not be afraid, Abraham. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward.

But Abraham said, Lord God, what will you give me, seeing I go childless, and the heir of my house is Elieser of Damascus? Then Abraham said, Look, you have given me no offspring.

[22 : 14] Indeed, one born in my house is my heir. And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir.

Then he brought him outside and said, Look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them. And he said to him, So shall your descendants be.

And then verse 6 as well. And he believed in the Lord and he accounted it to him for righteousness. So, you know, Abraham is speaking with the Lord and he's wondering, God, how will this promise be made and how will this promise come to be?

I'm childless. I have no offspring. You know, there's a servant in my home who is, his son is, right now, he is the heir to my house, to what is mine.

And so, how will my descendants, how will the nations be blessed through me, through my descendants, I don't have any children.

[23 : 36] And so, God brings Abraham outside and he shows him, shows him the heavens. He says, Look, look now toward heaven and count the stars if you are able to number them.

So shall your descendants be. And we see there that Abraham no longer questions. Verse 6 just simply tells us, And he believed in the Lord and he accounted it to him for righteousness.

So Abraham trusted in the Lord and he stepped out in faith, trusting that God would do as he said, that he would keep his promise. Okay, and so going back to our text, so who then are the descendants of Abraham?

Abraham. Our text tells us that it is only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. In verse 7, only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham.

So blood relations have nothing to do with God's promise to Abraham. The descendants that God was telling Abraham about as he brought him outside and told him to look to the heavens and to try and count the stars.

[25 : 10] Those descendants that God is talking about are all those who have responded and will yet respond to the gospel. So those descendants of Abraham that hasn't come to an end yet, they are still multiplying to this day.

Those descendants are all those that have responded and will yet respond to the gospel accepting that free gift of salvation offered by the Lord Jesus Christ.

Continuing in verse 8, and the scripture, that is, the Old Testament in its entirety, foresaw that God would justify, that is, to pardon or clear from guilt, the Gentiles by faith.

And so all along, the Old Testament has pointed to Christ coming as the Savior and Redeemer. It says here, and it preached the gospel to Abraham long before Christ came by saying, in you all the nations shall be blessed.

So looking forward to Christ's coming and to the blessing that all the nations would receive in him.

[26 : 39] So all those of faith in every nation are blessed along with Abraham for believing in God and his promises.

Now Abraham was declared righteous or he was justified for believing in God. We who are of faith are also declared righteous or justified for believing in the Son of God and we are blessed for it.

from there we'll look at the nature of the law. So he's, Paul has brought in Abraham as an example of being justified by faith.

The Galatians, they were swaying, they were caught up in false teaching. You know, the messages that they were hearing telling them that they needed more than faith in Jesus Christ to be saved.

You know, they were hearing that they must follow the law if they wanted to be saved. And so Paul addresses that in verses 10 through 14.

[27 : 58] For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse for it is written cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them but that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident for the just shall live by faith.

Yet the law is not of faith but the man who does them shall live by them. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law having become a curse for us for it is written cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus that we might receive the promise of the spirit through faith.

So Paul reminds the Galatians here of the futility of trying to do the works of the law.

He's saying if this is what you are trying to do you are not blessed as a son of Abraham but rather you are under the curse and you are under the curse because so it is written cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them.

Everyone attempting to do the works of the law is under the curse for who has ever been able to keep the whole law to not fail in one part.

[29 : 45] Let's look at James chapter 2 James chapter 2 verse 10 verse 10 verse 10 for whoever shall keep the whole law and yet stumble in one point he is guilty of all so he's saying there that you know for all those who are trying to do the works of the law to follow the whole law and it says whoever shall keep the whole law so working hard at it day and night keeping the whole law and yet stumble in one point so if you ever slip up once you're guilty of all of the whole law you're guilty of breaking every law if you've slipped in one area so very clearly under the curse so there is no blessing in the works of the law only a curse as we see back in our text no one is justified by the law in God's eyes for the

Lord says the just shall live by faith and so of the law it doesn't say it is by faith but rather the man who does them shall live by them it's a works program I have to do this I have to do that no faith involved it's all based on works trying to keep these laws so if the law brings us under a curse then the beauty of Christ coming and dying for us is that he redeemed us he took our sins the curse that we were under he took it upon himself and he bore them on the cross he became a curse for us in our place we deserved that curse and the penalty for it and yet

God loved us so much he was willing to allow his only son to become that curse in our place as he hung on the cross God did God do this why did we not receive what we deserve God did this to extend his blessing and he promised to Abraham to extend those blessings to the Gentile world in Christ Jesus in the Old Testament God focused on the Jews the children of Israel and yet he had a plan for bringing the Gentiles in as well you know that blessing is that we might receive the promise of the

Spirit through faith not through the law but through faith so the final sub point under you know being justified by faith proving that God keeping his promise verses 15 through 18 brethren I speak in the manner of men though it is only a man's covenant yet if it is confirmed no one annuls or adds to it now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made he does not say and to seeds as of many but as of one and to your seed who is Christ and this I say that the law which was 430 years later cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in

Christ that it should make the promise of no effect for if the inheritance is of the law it is no longer of promise but God gave it to Abraham by promise so does God keep his promise how long ago did Abraham die he is long gone many many generations have passed since then so is God holding to his promise promise that he made to Abraham so Paul begins by looking at the conduct among humans between people verse 15 brethren I speak in the manner of men though it is only a man's covenant I like how he starts it though it is only a man's covenant if this is what mankind does if two people make a covenant it is confirmed no one annuls it or adds to it you know if there's a deal made between men this is how they do it it's been confirmed it is in effect it's not being stopped and changes aren't being made this is the agreement this is the deal this is the promise this is the conduct among men right and so if this is the conduct among men how men conduct themselves how much more wouldn't

[36 : 18] God hold to his promises so to whom to whom did God make this promise is to Abraham and to his seed Paul goes on to clarify that is not to seeds sounding like there is many or many descendants of Abraham but only to one and to your seed and that seed that the Lord is talking about is Christ of the lineage you know generations down but you can trace the lineage from Abraham down to Christ all nations would be blessed in Christ for through him we have the promise of the spirit if we put our faith in him you know and so it's interesting you know given the circumstances the situation in the churches in

Galatia you know it's interesting that this promise that God made and Paul brings it out and he makes it clear to them you know it's interesting this promise that God made to Abraham it was 430 years before the law was ever given so then how can you fall for teaching like this how does that make sense to you how could the spirit have been promised by the works of the law you know clinging to Abraham as the Jews do Abraham as our father Abraham wasn't justified by the law scripture clearly tells us that he was because he believed

God he was counted righteous righteous he was justified by his faith in God so Abraham wasn't justified by the law it hadn't even been given yet it wouldn't be for another 430 years so so so how could look to Abraham as their father and expect blessing through the law when Abraham himself preceded the law and so it was clearly something else that justified him it was his belief in God and so then the law which came in so much later could not annul or cancel God's covenant or his promise with Abraham and it most definitely could not take the place of the promise the law could not take the place of the promise the law was not added to do that

Lord willing we'll look at that the next time I speak as we continue in chapter 3 of Galatians and so and then in verse 18 for if the inheritance is of the law it is no longer of promise but God gave it to Abraham by promise so speaking of the inheritance that is the receiving of the spirit through faith you're inheriting that if the spirit comes by the works of the law it's no longer of promise it isn't the spirit of promise you know then the covenant between God and Abraham is done so if we are coming by faith we then would not be looking for the blessing if it is coming through the law we know that it is not it is by faith so the sons those who are of the faith or of faith are sons of Abraham and partakers of that blessing

God gave the inheritance to Abraham by promise before the law ever was we too receive the spirit by faith an inheritance it is by faith so believe God's promises you know in John 14 1 read that in part you believe in God believe also in me those are Jesus' words to his disciples after he shares with them the details of his coming crucifixion to still any fears and doubts in their hearts in the disciples' hearts of him being the Messiah he assures them of their belief in him this is all part of the plan God is true to his word and he always keeps his promises and so to conclude this morning is to in review you know the issues threatening the Galatian churches they are still present today we face these issues all of the time there's plenty of false teaching out there and we must be careful in what we take in so always any message that you hear always hold it up to scripture you know that includes messages that I bring hold them up to scripture make sure that they line up with God's word

[42 : 39] God's word is our final authority it's critical that we spend time in the scriptures for ourselves daily every day to know what the word of God says if we read our bibles on a daily basis and we know what scripture says then we will be able to pick out false teaching for what it is we will have that discernment and also let's take a step back and let's examine our traditions why do we do what we do how tightly are we clinging to our ways are any of them getting in the way of our faith you know we have only to look into the scriptures to see the effect our ways have on us looking at to the

Jews in the Old Testament the children of Israel the Jews were so focused on their laws that they missed the Savior who was right there in their midst the Galatian churches they were being swayed by false teachers wanting to drag customs and traditions back in and so my prayer this morning is that we keep our eyes focused on the Lord as the children's story again as it talked about we keep our eyes focused on the Lord with his word our final authority and that we hold fast to our faith whereby we received the spirit of promise that we continue to live by faith and not the letter of the law partaking of the blessings that God has for the descendants of Abraham let's close in prayer heavenly father we bow before you again this morning lord we thank you for this day and lord we thank you for your blessings upon us lord if we pause for a moment to consider the blessings that you shower on us lord we are not able to number them they are so abundant so many we thank you for each one and just help us to help us to see those blessings and to be thankful for them lord we thank you that we are justified and we are declared righteous by faith and not by the works for your word clearly reveals it that there is no way that we can keep all the laws continually the time will come where we will slip and when we do we are guilty of all we are condemned we are under the curse and so we thank you for salvation in christ jesus by faith alone that when we come before you in faith accepting your son as our personal lord and savior and we walk in his footsteps in his ways we have the promise that you gave to abraham that all the nations would be blessed in him that we can partake of that blessing as well that it is bestowed upon us lord that you that you keep your promise lord we're thankful that you are true and faithful and that you watch over us and lead and guide us day by day as we journey this this walk of faith lord just thank you for each one here this morning and just pray that as we go from here that that you would just just bring it before us clearly that we must walk by faith works are the evidence of the faith that we have and that as we walk by faith you give us the strength to keep your law we cannot we cannot walk in the works of the law but we come to you by faith and with you we can walk just ask that you continue with us for the rest of this day and the week to come just pray these things in jesus name amen