

Justified by Faith, not Observance of the Law

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[0 : 00] A slightly different situation here this morning, Galatians 3, but actually it has a bit of a courtroom feel to it. As the Apostle Paul, he's taking the stand in what is essentially God's courtroom.

And he's got the Galatians on trial. In fact, actually, it's worth bearing in mind that the whole of this book of Galatians is not just a book or a message or a series of letters of the Apostle Paul to the people of Galatia.

These are letters to Christians. They're letters to Christians. He's addressing those who've previously placed their faith in Jesus Christ.

And here in chapter 3, in many ways, as you go through it, you could sit there and you could just read it like you're reading a fiction book. You could just read it like you're reading a newspaper and let it wash over you.

Or you could read it and understand something of the shocking truth and the pain that is actually in this. As I speak today, please pray.

[1 : 13] I don't stand here. I don't speak for my own benefit. I speak for the glory of God. Please pray. Pray that God will be heard this morning.

That actually as a people will have listening ears and will understand what it is that God is trying to say to us. Now, here in Galatians, the Apostle Paul, he is so blunt in his rhetorical comments.

You know, you can hear the questions that he is raising as he speaks. They are rhetorical. He knows answers to them already. He's just trying to make a point to the Galatians.

And this morning, what I want you to imagine is that you're coming into this God's courtroom. You're there too. Okay? You're there right in the midst.

Paul is giving this statement. And you're sitting there. You're in the gallery. You're the curious spectators who are there to witness everything that is being said by the Apostle Paul.

[2 : 19] This morning is going to be a slightly different style. As you're sitting there in the courtroom, I want to try and portray a little bit of what the Apostle Paul was trying to say. So join me in God's courtroom.

My dear idiots of Galatia. You foolish Galatians.

You've been hoodwinked. The wool has been pulled over your eyes. You've allowed yourselves to listen to the false teachers.

Galatians, you've yielded yourselves to the teaching of the Judaizers. And you've allowed the world to guide you. You have failed to listen to God.

Oh, Galatians, you've failed to hear what I taught you. You've failed to understand and to follow what it is that I established in your churches with you.

[3 : 24] Galatians, do you not understand? You've committed spiritual treason. You've turned from this gospel. Galatians. Oh, I ask you.

How could you embrace the truth right at the very beginning? That the sinners are justified by grace. That they are justified by grace in Christ through faith.

And now you have turned. And you've turned to this new position of this gospel plus the circumcision. Plus the good works.

These good works of the law for justification. Really? The gospel, Galatians, it has nothing to do with personal works.

The gospel is all about what God did through Christ. Once for all. This gospel is not just good advice to men.

[4 : 30] This gospel is good news about what Jesus Christ has done. Foolish Galatians. Can you not grasp the gospel?

Can you not grasp it? The law says do this and do that. The gospel, it says that Christ was crucified. And he accomplished all that is necessary for salvation. Galatians, why can't you receive this good news for yourselves?

Why is it that you're resisting the teaching that I gave you? Why can't you resist the teaching of those who are leading you astray?

You know the truth. Galatians, the truth was revealed to you before. You've taken your heads and you've buried them in the sand.

[5 : 43] And you've failed to get through your rather thick skulls. That you're in a battle. You're in a battle of Christianity versus Christian moralism.

You know that Christian moralism is not the promise that God made for his people. You've got to admit that the two, they are completely separate. Galatians, you've got to understand.

You put oil into a jar of water. They don't mix. They remain separate. They only contrast. That's the same here.

If you were to step out of the courtroom for a moment. I want you to be thinking in your head so you're not just sitting there in a gallery. I want you to ask a question of yourselves too. Are we foolish too?

Are we foolish too? No, the people today, they think they're rejecting Christianity. But actually, most of the time, they're rejecting Christian moralism.

[6 : 47] And in many ways, we shouldn't be surprised, should we? I mean, the worldwide church, I'm not saying this church, there's no condemnation on my lips on this church.

The worldwide church has an appalling record, doesn't it? I mean, you turn on the news and if you have a look at some of the events that are going on in the churches, the things that some of the leaders of churches have done, some of the things that have gone on in the churches, I mean, they're horrific.

They're appalling. The church isn't as God saw it to be. When's the church going to awake from its slumber?

When's it going to awake from its slumber? When is the church going to return to God? Step back into the courtroom.

How is it that you heard and you believed the gospel? And the spirit, the spirit of God had been given to you.

[7 : 54] And now you seek to finish in the flesh what Christ begun in you. Galatians, Christian believers. Do you deny Abraham?

Do you deny Abraham? Of course not. You are as familiar with Abraham as I am. You're learned. You know that Abraham was before Moses.

And it's Moses' teaching that those Judaizers are trying to force upon you. But God made a promise to Abraham. The promise was that Abraham would bear a son and descendants.

Abraham, he believed God. Despite the fact that he was a really old man. Abraham, in his mind, he may have seemed completely and utterly overwhelmed by the thought that God would provide a son to him at that age.

Probably seemed utterly preposterous to Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. Abraham. But Abraham's faith. Abraham's faith. Abraham's faith was reckoned to him as righteousness.

[9 : 16] Abraham. Abraham was justified. Because by faith, he believed God. By faith, he believed God.

Galatians. Galatians understand. Abraham had done nothing to deserve it. Nothing at all. And do you know that even before the promise, God had made another promise.

A blessing that would be inherited by all nations. Justification. That declared not guilty. That declared innocent. That declared righteous with God.

That the true children of Abraham would not be the physical descendants of Abraham through the Jewish race. But that the spiritual descendants who share Abraham's faith.

The Christian believers. Those would be the descendants. Galatians. Why have you failed to see this? Why?

[10 : 22] It's plain to you. Why have you failed to see this? Why allow these false teachers to come in and teach you stuff that is contrary to this? Because they've indoctrinated you with their own teaching.

They've indoctrinated you with contradictory teaching. Your responsibility. Your responsibility, Galatians, was to keep Christ crucified right before your eyes. And share in the faith like Abraham. If I may be so bold court as to present my exhibit A to you. It is simply a plumb line. The plumb line represents between God and between us. The line itself is Jesus Christ.

The plumb line is what we need to follow. Any teaching that is outside of the plumb line. That is not of God and not of Christ. And is to be rejected.

[11:29] Christ crucified. It's a plumb line we must follow. Not one person is justified before God by the law. You cannot work to find favour in God.

You cannot underestimate the seriousness of sin. Or the sufficiency of God. The law is God's law. I do not deny that.

For what the law says is what God says. What the law blesses, God blesses. But what the law curses. God curses. Disobedience to God will bring about a curse of God.

The curse of God will expose the person to God's penalty. To judgment. Galatians.

Can you see again that God's blessing brings justification. It brings life. Death. And the opposite is what comes from the curse of God. That the curse of God.

[12:37] It brings condemnation. And it brings death. The two are so, so different. They are opposite. The Judaizers around us.

They're trying to convince you that the Gentiles. Those ones that you say are the common people. The ones who are without the law. That they're to be under God's curse.

But they are wrong. They are wrong. And this may shock you. This may shock you Galatians. But the people under God's curse. It's not reserved for the ignorant.

And the lawless Gentiles. As those Judaizers claim. No. But the Jews too. For there is no distinction between Jew and Gentile. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.

Instead. You've got to understand what Jesus Christ has done. You say that under the law. Given to Moses. That a person. Sentenced to death.

[13:43] Executed by stoning. And then fixed to a stake. Or hung to a tree. That was a symbol of divine. Rejection. That was reserved only for criminals.

That's what our custom says. The Romans as you know. They used crucifixion rather than hanging. But it's the equivalent.

I know that the thought of the Son of God. Jesus Christ. The promised Messiah. Dying. Under such a curse. It is. Is astonishing for you. And whilst.

Many Jews may struggle. To come to terms with the fact that. That Christ. The anointed one of God. Instead of. Of reigning. And being on a throne.

The throne. Would actually die. Hanging on a cross. Is astonishing to you. However. The curse that Jesus Christ bore.

[14:47] Was for all. Jesus Christ. He died. He died. Not for his own sin. Not for his own sin.

He became. The sin. He became. The curse. For all of us. Take a breather.

Out of the courtroom. For a second. You can imagine. A little bit of the intensity. In there. The words that Paul is using. The pictures that he's painting. At that time.

When Christ was crucified. The way that Jesus. Died. Would have been countercultural. The death on the tree.

Was reserved for the criminals. And how. Therefore. Paul. Describes how. How. How Christ. Being accursed.

[15:43] He died that way. And it was an explanation. That. That the Jews. Listened to him. Would have understood. Really clearly. They would have got. What it is. That Paul was trying to say to them.

The fact that. That Jesus Christ. Bore all sins. And that all sins.

Are equally shocking too. Isn't it? My sin. Your sin. Whether by thought. Or by direct action.

All of it is sin. When it's contrary to God. The same sin of Becky Watts' murderers. We would find that uncomfortable.

Wouldn't we? The sin of Becky Watts' stepbrother. The murder. Dismembering. Of her body. That's a far greater sin.

[16:39] Than the way I think about someone. Maybe the way I treat others. They're different kinds of sins. Aren't they? The actions of the IS.

Jihadists. In Paris. Abominable. Absolutely shocking. It's a sin. You and me.
We are all sinners. We're all in the same boat. Every single one of us. And I think that this weekend.
For me. That has been so poignant.

I am no different. To any of them. I'm no better. And no worse. We are all sinners.

Our sin is no different. We step back into the courtroom. Galatians. Before you think.

[17:43] That I'm advocating. That everyone has been redeemed. By what Jesus Christ did. Know this. That it was in Christ. That God provided. The way of salvation.

For us all. And so each of us. Must be in Christ. To receive salvation. Through the redemption. Of Christ. To be in Christ.

To be united in Christ. Can only be accomplished. Through faith. There is no work. There. There's no laws. To adhere to.

It is by faith. That you come to Christ. Simply. Laying hold of Christ. Personally. It may seem.

Utterly absurd. To you Galatians. It may seem. Unacceptable. To you. That salvation. Is a free gift. Of God. Without having to make. Any contribution.

[18:38] Towards it. And I can get that Galatians. But. But really. What. What can. What can we. What can us.

As sinners. Realistically. Contribute. Galatians. I return to Abraham. Abraham. Because Abraham. We see. That there's. God's. God's plan. Of salvation. Being worked out in him. Abraham. 430 years.

Before. Moses. 430 years. Before Moses. Was. Was given. The law. Moses.

You follow. Moses's teaching. Abraham. Abraham. Was first. You need. To get this. Abraham. Abraham. Was. He was given. A promise. From God. That there'll be.

[19:40] A seed. Without a limit. That. The seed. Would be. Blessed. By God. See this. Abraham. Was. Blessed.

Because God. Was saying. I will do. I will do. I will do. But when. When you come. To the law. The law. Of Moses. Then God.

Is saying. You will do. You will do. You will do. Abraham. Had to believe. The promise. God. Dealt. With Abraham. In terms. Of promise. In terms. Of grace. In terms. Of faith. The law. Of Moses.

Had to be. Obeyed. Galatians. It was. In obedience. And God. Dealing. Here. With. Those people. Are. By law. By commands.

[20:33] And by works. But. Galatians. We. Have to. Acknowledge. That. The God. Of Abraham. Is the same. God. Of Moses. They are.

One. And the same. Yet. I advocate. For you. Today. That the promise. Of God. To Abraham. It supersedes. The law. To Moses. And you. Galatians. You.

Galatians. Today. You. Are. Enjoying. The very. Promise. Which God. Made. To Abraham. Objection.

Say. The Galatians. Objection. Sorry. Sorry. You. Say. You. Say. If God. Is the same. God. And the author. Of both. What is the purpose.

When they appear. To compromise. Contradict. And reject. Each other. Let us consider. A will. A Greek will. Is a covenant.

[21:27] In which the wishes. And the promises. That. That are expressed. Are unalterable. They can. Cannot be annulled. By anyone else. When those wishes.

And expressions. Of. Of a promise. Are made. That is it. They are. Fixed. And set in stone. And it's this kind of. Unconditional.

Unconditional promise. Of the singular seed. The seed of Jesus Christ. That. That God gave. To Abraham. That is the unbreakable. Covenant.

Galatians. Galatians. If the. Judaizers. Are right. If. If. If the false teachers.

Are right. That we are to keep the law. That then justification. Is given to those who keep the law. And consequently. Justification.

[22:21] Is not given by promise. For you can't have it both ways. You can't have it both ways. So consider.

How can God. Go back on his promise. God gave a promise. To Abraham. Can he go back on his promise. Galatians. Is he a promise.

Breaking God. Galatians. Of course not. Of course he isn't. He is the promise making. The promise keeping God. To inherit the blessing.

Of the promise. Given to Abraham. You must be in Christ. You must be receiving Christ. I've heard you question. The promise that God gave to Abraham.

Knowing it is. Under covenant. And not to be broken. And so. You've. Now questioned. That as God also gave the law. Is the law.

[23 : 22] Now to be ignored. And if it's not to be ignored. Then what is its purpose. I must confess. In many ways. That is a good question. But I tell you.

That the law is not unnecessary. But I will make very clear. To you Galatians. That the law. Is not the way. Of salvation. What the law is to do.

It is to frame. Sin. It is to frame. Sin. To convict a person. Of their. Of their sinful state. And condemn the sinner. To death. The purpose of the law.

Is to convict. Sin. Within the purpose. Of God. Submit. Submit.

To the law. And each of us. Every single one of us. In this courtroom today. Seed. Their sin state. It is the.

[24 : 20] It is the law. That looks. To Christ. Christ. The seed of Abraham. And we can know by faith.

The grace of God. For the forgiveness of sin. Galatians. The. The Judaizers. That they're telling you. That the law. Annuls the promise.

It makes the promise. Utterly void. Once again. Once again. Galatians. These false teachers. They are wrong. They are wrong.

The law. It confirms. The mighty promise. Of God. And it makes. Makes it completely.

Indispensable. See. The need to turn away.

From the way you are living. Please. See it. Acknowledge. That the promise. Was given by God. First. Hand. To Abraham. Fulfilled.

[25 : 20] In Christ. And that this was. Before. The law. The law. It was given. Third hand. The law. Was given.

From God. To the angels. From angels. To Moses. And Moses. To the people. Maybe some of you here.

You think that. The law. Wasn't. Wasn't. Given through. Through angels. But. When you've read. The Old Testament. You know the word. Elohim. Elohim.

Is for the angels here. Therefore. The law. Of Moses. It was given. Third hand. Compared to. The promise. Given to Abraham. First hand. So I want you.

To stop being foolish. You can trust. God. For righteousness. Just as. Abraham did. Every single. One of us.

[26 : 17] Is either. Enslaved. By the. By the law. And they're. Awaiting. The promise. To be fulfilled. Which is living out. In the Old Testament. Huh. Or there's. The religion of Moses.

Old Testament way. Or the New Testament way. The New Testament way. Of living in the. Inherited. Promise. Of God.

Through Christ. Christ. You've got to understand. That there are two. Very. Distinct. Ways. To live. And there is no.

Gray area. In between. There is no. In between. Two very. Distinct persons. And you've got to. Pass through. From. From the experience.

Of the law. To. To come then. Into the. Into the light. Of Jesus Christ. By God's promise.

[27 : 25] To Abraham. Go from. From the curse. Of the law. And the entrapment. Of death. To what is.

Or should be. A far more. Desirable. Freedom. In Christ. Galatians. Do you not. Understand.

That. That. When you're in Christ. United to him. By faith. At that point. You are. Accepted. By God. Despite.

Your sinfulness. That was framed. For you. By the law. Despite. Your law breaking. I know. There are some. That they say.

That. That faith. Is just for. It's just for simpletons. For faith. That faith is. Simply placing trust.

[28 : 23] In a really. Reliable. God. Galatians. God. Amen. I sum. Up this statement. By saying. That. When you put on Christ. When you put on Christ.

Like a garment. just as when you move from childhood to adulthood you were to put on the special toga well when you put on the garment of Christ you show that you've grown up and you show that you've become one of Abraham's descendants what are the benefits of putting on Christ Galatians I tell you that in Christ we become sons of God God is no longer our judge but now God is our father we are accepted and we are forgiven in Christ and we are baptised into Christ not that baptism unites a person to Christ but baptism it points it points to what Christ did for each and every one of us on the cross the benefit of putting on Christ is in Christ we are all one we are all one there is no distinction between race neither Jew nor Greek there is no distinction between rank there is no class distinction and there is no distinction in the sexes there is equality between men and women all are equal distinctions do not matter for the living of life of Christ and in Christ we are heirs of the promise to Abraham you take your place in the unfolding purpose of God that historical succession of faith and you become heirs heirs of the promise of the mighty one which God made to Abraham in order of this Galatians understand that that life and each of our lives has a meaning each of our lives it has a purpose even if you do not see it even if you think that you're a misfit and that you don't belong anywhere even if you've been listening to the Judaizers and you have been led astray in Christ every person can find their place in eternity you know as we step out of the courtroom for the very last time

Christians I wonder if Paul would have said the same thing to us this morning are we foolish? are we foolish? have we known the grace of God just as the Galatians but we've slipped to another way of living?

only you know the way that you're living only you know if the way that you're living is Christ-centered and that's for you to examine your own life or can we say with joy in Christ I am a son of God in Christ I am united to the all redeemed people of God past, present and future and in Christ I discover my identity in Christ I find my feet and in Christ I come home Christians there's two ways that you're living your life today with or without Christ are we foolish?

[32 : 30] are you living your own way? perhaps this morning you've realized that you're living under the law because what you've never done is faced the truth commence this series saying how the series on Galatians will be looking at facing the truth lifting your hand out or your head out of the sand perhaps you've never faced your sin and you are in bondage and you know your mind is in bondage you know you're feeling tormented because you've never faced it do you know I remember that all too vividly I remember the years where I was tormented trying to live my own way with just a front that tried to say to everyone else I was okay it's just not worth it it's not worth living like that you can be set free in Christ friends I say go to the law go to the law when you go to the law you'll be condemned in your sinful state and then you go to Christ and by faith in him alone you become justified and declared innocent for God if we're living in foolishness may each of us make the right decision for God even today amen thank you for besser acc Bismang to the law will believe in you never had to be in the law you