

Galatians 3 Commentary-Barber

Galatians 3 Commentary Verse by Verse Exposition Dr. Wayne Barber

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Galatians 3:1 Abide With Me

The context is that Paul has had to confront a very dear brother. This brother has acted foolishly. Now I want you to remember that. He has acted foolishly. That's going to come up again and again in our message today.

Well, I'm so glad to be back with you again and what a great day. Turn with me to Galatians 3. You say, "Wayne, this is Easter Sunday morning, are you going to continue what you have always done?" Yes, but something I have learned. I'm overwhelmed at how God is so far in front of me. This is why I preach verse by verse. I have always discovered the next verse you come to is the one you need, and nobody can get mad at you because it is the next verse. But it's awesome. Here we are on Resurrection Sunday, we are entering into Galatians 3:1, and what a truth: a group of believers that have walked away of the truth of the resurrection. You will see this in a moment.

The context is that Paul has had to confront a very dear brother. This brother has acted foolishly. Now I want you to remember that. He has acted foolishly. That's going to come up again and again in our message today. And do you who that dear brother was? That dear brother was Simon Peter himself. I think the only time Simon Peter ever opened his mouth was to change feet. Peter had failed to trust in the resurrection power of Christ that now resided in him as a believer. He failed to do that. He had, in fear, cowered down to some religious people that had come over from Jerusalem to Antioch. Antioch was a Gentile area and here was Peter just visiting and these Judaizers came in. As a result Peter withdrew; he cowered down to their very presence among them. He acted foolishly.

Now let me explain something to you in case you are visiting today—and we are so glad to have you. Just in case you have not been with us in this flow, I want to explain to you what Paul is teaching in Galatians. Christianity is not a religion. It's incredible how many people don't understand this. Normal Christianity is not a religion. I know it is taught that way in school; I know the pagan world considers it to be a religion. It is not. Judaism, Islam, Hinduism, Buddhism, and so on, that is a religion. A religion is based on external works that a man does in order to measure up and appease a god who is very vindictive. And he may or may not attain that. Christianity is in of no way, no form or fashion a religion. It is a relationship, a relationship with God the Father through the Lord Jesus His Son.

I don't know how many times being on a plane, when I traveled all the time doing conference work worldwide, I had somebody ask me, "What do you do?" I love that question. They would break into hives when I tell them I'm a preacher. I mean, it's incredible to watch the reaction. I have had it said to me so many times in defense, and basically to set some perimeters, they say to me the same phrase, "Well, I want you to know preacher, religion never worked for me." I have had that said, stated to me from Portland to Salt Lake; I've had it in Reno; from Zurich, Switzerland; to Johannesburg, South Africa. Exact same statement. And I've had the greatest fun looking back at them and I say, "You are exactly right. It never worked for me either." Now that puts it into a different perspective. And they look at me and say, "Well, you are a preacher, aren't you." And I say, "Yeah, I'm preacher." "Well, what do you preach?" And I tell them about a precious relationship we can have with God the Father through the Lord Jesus Christ.

That is the teaching of the book of Galatians. A group of people have walked away from that truth and have gone back to that old form and that function that has no power in it whatsoever. You see, believers don't have a set of rules that they have to obey in order to measure up. They don't have to do that. Why? Because God the Father sent His Son Jesus Christ into this earth. He was born of a virgin; the God-man.

Why did He come? He came to do what we have already discovered we could not do. We are born in Adam. We are born in sin; and sin cannot in any way please the Father. He came to fulfill the Law we could never fulfill in a million years. And then He took upon Himself our sin debt. You see the wages of sin is death. He took our debt upon Himself, went to the cross, paid a debt He did not owe, when we owed a debt we could not pay. Now He that gave the Law and He that fulfilled that same Law comes to live in the lives of people who put their faith and trust in Him. We do not have to measure up anymore. He has measured up for us.

So Christianity takes us out from under a bondage to have to some way measure up and please a God who normally cannot be pleased. He is not that at all. God is pleased in His Son and His Son has been pleased to die for you and me. Christ not only died on the cross, but on the third day He was raised from the dead, vindicated in the Spirit that now truly He is the Son of God, Lord of lords, King of kings. Now, listen, the Law is no longer our master. He has fulfilled it. It is taken care of. The Lord Jesus now becomes our Master. We do not have to earn His love as believers. We do not have to earn His pleasure as believers. His pleasure and His love are freely given to us in Christ Jesus. But Jesus Christ is our Lord. He lives in us to do through us what we could never do ourselves.

Now, in the context of Galatians 2, Peter has forgotten that truth. He knew that truth. He agreed with Paul about it when he was in Judea. He has forgotten that truth. He has walked away from it. He has forgotten that the Law and those who teach it are no longer our master. Peter made a serious mistake when he cowered down to these religious leaders that had come over from Jerusalem. And therefore he left Paul no other option except to confront him face to face, and that is Gal 2:14-18. And then in verse 19 Paul just turns away from Peter. He says, it's almost just like I do not have anything more to say about you. Let me talk about me for a second. And he says in Gal 2:19, "For through the law I died to the law, so that I might live unto God." He said I want the relationship. I want to live unto Him. I do not want to go back here and be condemned and controlled by a set of rules. I want the joy of having a relationship with the Lord.

Well in Gal 2:20-21, he states his new position and his new direction in life. This is so exciting. This is what Christianity is. He says, "I have been crucified with Christ." He shows that when Christ was put on the cross, and this just grabs me, that Paul was there with Him. Figuratively he was there with Him. Why? Because Christ took Paul's sin upon Himself. So, technically, Paul was there with Him. Do you realize every believer in here can say that? When He was crucified I was crucified; therefore everything has changed. Co-crucified is what Paul said.

This has changed everything. The law that used to condemn him cannot touch him anymore because it has been fulfilled by the God-man. It cannot condemn him anymore. And unless he chooses, it cannot control him. You see, not only that, the man he used to be is dead. He is gone. He is a brand new (*kainos*) creature in Christ, 2 Corinthians 5:17-note. Christ has come to live in him. This is what Christianity is, it is becoming a child of God, being a brand new person. Christ took his place and now comes to live in him. He lives a total different way.

He continues in Gal 2:20 "It is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me. And the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me." The One who gave the law again, the One who fulfilled it, Christ, the Son of God, now by faith has come to live in Paul. He does not live to do things for Christ, because he knows that that will nullify the grace of God. That word "nullify," (*atheteo*) means set aside. Gal 2:21 says, "I do not nullify the grace of God." I am not going back to a religion that tells me to do this in order to earn favor with God. That is gone. My favor is in Christ. It has already been won by Him. I am not going to live that way anymore. Paul is convinced that any fleshly work—which is what religion is all about—that is done for God absolutely makes Christ's death on the cross a needless and void thing.

He goes on to say, "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly." The resurrected Christ has come to live in all of us today in the Person of the Holy Spirit to do through us what we have already learned that we cannot do ourselves.

Now, this is good news. This is what the gospel is all about, becoming a brand new creature, Christ coming to live in us. But isn't it interesting; have you found this to be amazing, that on days like today, Easter, how many people come looking for something that they either don't have or have, but don't know how to possess? They live as if they don't even believe what we have just said. Even on this day when we should be celebrating, there are a lot of Christians that are miserable, depressed and full of despair. Easter comes and we sing "Up from the grave He arose," or "Christ has Risen" and we love that. "He has risen, He's arisen indeed." And we walk outside the door, get in our car and live as if we do not have a clue what we have just said.

Now that is exactly where the text is going today. We are dealing with believers who have chosen to live foolishly. And we are going to see that. The third chapter of Galatians the apostle Paul begins with a rebuke to these people. This is all the churches in southern Galatia. He says in Gal 3:1, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?" They had seen it. God has opened their eyes and Jesus had been crucified and resurrected from the dead. These Galatians however now have been deceived by the very same people that Peter was afraid of back in Gal 2. And what has happened is they have walked away from that relationship again, chosen foolishly to buy back into a religious mindset.

FOOLISH

Now, we are just going to deal with one word today. I think it will bless your heart before it is over with. It is the word "foolish". We need to understand that word. The word foolish is used again in Gal 3:3, "Are you so foolish, having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" You mean to tell me, it took Christ to save you, but now somehow you can sanctify yourself? Is that what you are saying? Do you think by your fleshly work you can perfect yourselves? The word **foolish** is the word **anoetos**. It comes from two Greek words. "**A**" means without, and then the word **noetos**, which means understanding. Are you without understanding? Are you ignorant of something?

Now you have to understand something about this word. There is something that we must grasp. The word foolish that is used here is the word that means intentionally foolish. Now, do you know the difference in ignorance and stupidity? I know when I was growing up my momma said, "Don't ever call anybody stupid. Don't even say stupid." But I don't know how else to say it. If you don't know and you do it that is ignorance; if you know better and do it, I'm sorry, that is stupid. The word foolish in Gal 3:1 can be translated stupid.

I did something. My grandson, Jonathan, is three years old. I did something ignorant in his presence the other day; not stupid, ignorant. We have a sound system, a surround sound system in our house. It was there when we bought it. I do not even know what one is, but we have one. When you have the TV sound on the surround system will not work. You have to turn the TV sound off then turn on the surround sound if you want to hear it all the way around.

Well, somebody turned on the TV sound. So while I am turning it down I am turning the surround sound up and you understand where I am going with this. There is no real distinguishable sounds, but you can hear a static or something. It is in that speaker and it is getting louder and louder and louder and louder. And as soon as I got the TV sound off, the other sound kicked in at a volume that did strange things to my hearing aids. I tell you what, I have never heard sound that loud in my life. Jonathan had just walked into the room, and when that sound went off, he just screamed. He just screamed at the top of his lungs.

My wife grabbed Jonathan, ran him out of the room. My daughter and I just sort of froze, you know, we didn't know what to do. Finally, I tried to get it down and it took forever and I finally got that sound down. Well, he's just sobbing. After a while he calms down, he walks in the room, and I am so sorry, because I did not mean to do it. I didn't know what I was doing. I said, "Jonathan, I'm so sorry. I didn't mean to do that." He had the funniest look on his face. He looked at me and he went, "Don't you do that again." "Okay, I won't." Now, that time it was ignorance. The next time it is stupid, okay.

You got the point. When you don't know, you don't know. But when you do know and still do it, that is when you are foolish in the Greek understanding.

Well, the Galatians were guilty of intentional stupidity. Their situation was because of their own choices. I want us to depart from Galatians just for a minute because we are going to understand that word today, hopefully. And I want us to turn to Luke 24. We are going to enter into a story on Resurrection Sunday and we are going to see how the Lord Jesus reprimands two of His disciples with the same phrase, "O foolish men." I want you to understand that on this day when we should be celebrating, there are many believers that can't celebrate in this room even this morning. They can't do it because they are living foolishly. They have made choices to live that way and as a result they are not reaping what the fullness of God is that He wants to offer to them.

The story opens in Luke 24:13 with two disciples walking along, talking on the way to the road to Emmaus. It says in Lk 24:13, "And, behold, two of them were going that very day to village named Emmaus, which was about seven miles from Jerusalem." Now the word foolish does not appear right away, so don't get impatient. These two men are foolish men. You will see that before the message is over. So just understand that. We will get to it in time.

There are three things that I want you to see today. Perhaps it will encourage your heart. First of all is God's response to our foolishness. If you can't get encouraged by this it would be a great day to get saved. I want you to know this. God loves us even when we are foolish. I want you to know that. He loved us before the foundation of the world, so our foolishness today doesn't surprise Him. He loves us in spite of us. Usually I would finish with that point, but I want to start with that point. I want to make sure you get it in your mind, God loves you even when you live foolishly.

It says, "And, behold, two of them were going that very day." Now that phrase, "that very day" refers to Resurrection morning, the first Easter, if you please. Lk 24:12 precedes Lk 24:13, which in most chapters it is that way. It says, "But Peter got up and ran to the tomb, stooping and looking in he saw the linen wrappings only and he went away to his home marveling at what had happened." That is the same day. It says "Now on the same day two of them." Now the "two of them" were not of the original 12. In fact, by this time Judas has hanged himself and there are only 11 left, and these are not the original. These are just two followers of Jesus, two disciples of Jesus. It could have been you and I if we were living in that day.

Emmaus was seven miles from Jerusalem, or about; it says about seven miles from Jerusalem. Now the topic of their discussion is interesting. On Resurrection Sunday they are not talking about the resurrection. They are talking about the crucifixion. It's interesting here. It says in Lk 24:14, "And they were talking with each other about all these things which had taken place." Now you will see in the context in a moment, all they were talking about is the death of Jesus Christ. "He's dead. He's dead; He failed. They crucified Him." And that was the gist of their conversation.

Well, first it seems to be an innocent conversation. But the more we stay in it the more you see where it's going. Now here is the thing I want you to see and I don't want you to miss it. It is the Lord Jesus that comes to them. They don't go to Him. He comes to them. That is the way it always is. He is constantly pursuing you and me. I see these little bumper stickers, "I found Jesus." No, you didn't. He found you. You're not even looking for Him. This stuff about seekers; listen, there is no seekers that are not believers. Nobody is seeking for God, Isaiah said. God is seeking for you and me. And the fact of coming is in the plural in Scripture. He continues to come and continues to come and even though He lives in us He continues to reveal Himself to us.

Lk 24:15: "But while they were talking and discussing, Jesus Himself approached and began traveling with them." Wouldn't you like to have been a fly on the wall? They are walking along saying, "Man, they killed Him. He is crucified." Jesus, He just walks along with them. They have not figured it out yet. He's walking right along with them. Christ the resurrected Lord comes to them. By the way, if you are here this morning and you are living foolishly—you will find out what that is in a moment—I want you to know and be encouraged that Jesus has already been coming to you over and over and over again. But you are probably like them; you haven't recognized Him yet. I want you to be encouraged, Christ comes to us.

These two disciples did not have a clue that it was the Lord Jesus. It says in Lk 24:16, "But their eyes were prevented from recognizing Him." That word "prevented" is the word *krateo*. *Krateo* means to have control over something. It's in the passive voice. It means that Jesus took control over their ability to perceive who He was. They could still see the road; they could see the sky; they could see Him; but He took away their ability to discern who He was. Now, I don't know how that happened, but He did that.

I wonder how many of us again today are frustrated? And you will see in a moment, living foolishly frustrates you. You are in despair. You are despondent. You are discouraged. Life is falling apart. And here it is, Easter Sunday morning. Oh, good grief. I guess we will go to church. And do you realize how many times Jesus has been coming to you, but you have not yet been able to see it? It might be a daughter who says, "Daddy, I want you to take me to church." You didn't see Jesus in that. That's who it was. It might be a wife, or a husband, or a friend who says, "Would you stop drinking because you are killing our family. Don't you see where it's taking you?" You haven't seen Jesus in that. All you have seen was a wife that wanted you to do what was right. Maybe it's a friend that keeps coming to you and says, "You know, I would love to sit down with you and pray with you and get in the word," but you don't have time for it. But you didn't realize that is Jesus in that person—because He lives in people—coming to you.

You know what I pray? I pray that Jesus is coming through me today to encourage your heart, to let you know that, even though you might be living foolishly, God loves you in spite of your foolishness. He has a plan for you and wants to love you right back into His presence. Christ is always coming to us. He loves us even when we have been foolish. Anybody been foolish besides me in your life? Aren't you glad He loves us in spite of our foolishness?

You see, I want you to make sure you get that heavy in your head, because we are going to go now into what that foolishness is. And before we get there remember God loves us. Eventually, it will be His love that will bring you back to repentance. Romans 2:4 (note) says "Don't you understand it is God's love, it's His goodness and kindness that leads you to repentance." Somebody here today, I guarantee you, has been living foolishly. You have not been honoring God. You haven't been in His Word and you are frustrated on Easter Sunday morning. You came because everybody else came in your family and you did not want to be the only one at home. But I want you to know something. God wants to take you by the hand this morning and say, "I love you. I know you've been full of despair and everything else in your life, but I want to lead you right back into My presence. I have got a plan for your life.

I love you and I want to do things through you.” That is the gospel of grace (cf Acts 20:24-note), folks.

Well, first of all is God’s response to foolishness. But now, what is the reason for us being fools? Where does it come from? Where does it start? What do you mean intentional foolishness? Well, let’s look. Lk 24:17, “And He said to them, what are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” Now, the first thing that has got to come to your mind is that Jesus already knew their thoughts, much less what they were talking about. I don’t know if you have read that in the New Testament, Matthew 9:4, Matthew 12:25, Luke 9:47, all of Jesus’ knowing their thoughts. Now, if He knows their thoughts, He certainly know what they have been talking about. So why does He have to ask them. What is He doing here?

You have to realize this whole conversation is for their benefit. He already knows what they are talking about. He knows how discouraged they are. But He needs for them to answer Him so that He then might be able to help them in a profound way. And He said to them, “What are these words that you are exchanging with one another as you are walking?” And, and it says, “Immediately they stood still, looking sad.” Now that could have been that they were already looking sad. I have seen a lot of Christians on Sundays that look sad. Maybe that was part of it. But it could be also, by the tense that is used here—aorist passive—that by His question it froze them in their tracks. Having to answer what they have just been discussing froze them in their tracks. They stood still. “What are you talking about?”

And the word “sad” means gloomy, discouraged, frustrated. You pick any word you want to put into that. Their countenance fell and they stood there frozen in their tracks. “And then, on the day of resurrection, you mean somebody could be a believer and be sad and despondent and gloomy? No!” You see, these are two believers, two followers of Jesus, and they are gloomy and sad on the very day they should be celebrating.

One of them, named Cleopas, has the presence of mind to answer Jesus back. “One of them named Cleopas answered and said to Him,” now listen; this is funny; “Are you the only one visiting Jerusalem and unaware of the things which have happened here in these days?” I don’t know if you see any humor in this at all, but I just get a kick out of it. I mean, He kind of understood, you know. He was the one they crucified. He is the one that went into the grave. He is the one who came out. He is the one who resurrected. He kind of understands. But remember, it just shows you they do not realize who He is yet.

“And He said to them,” now this continues the humor to me. “What things?” And He knows “what things.” And they said to Him.” Now their answer tells a lot: “The things about Jesus the Nazarene who was a prophet [Oh, my friend, He is greater than a prophet] mighty in deed and word in the sight of God and all the people. And how the chief priest and our rulers delivered Him to the sentence of death, and they crucified Him,” and you can almost feel the remorse. They crucified Him. He is dead. He failed. “But we were hoping,” Lk 24:21, “that it was He who was going to redeem Israel.” They didn’t understand. The very ones who proclaimed to know what happened were the ignorant ones at this point. “Indeed, besides all this, it is the third day since these things happened.”

The third day! Now, I don’t know exactly they meant that, whether or not they knew that He had said “the third day”. I get the feeling they hadn’t paid a bit of attention to what Jesus had said. You see, do you understand that foolishness begins when you don’t pay attention to what God has said? That’s part of the problem. And then we start living in a way that is intentionally apart from Him. Matthew 12:40. He said, “For just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.” Mark 8:31, “And He began to teach them that the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and the chief priests and the scribes and be killed and after three days rise again.” Mark 9:31, “For He was teaching His disciples and telling them, ‘The Son of Man is to be delivered into the hands of men and they will kill Him, and when He has been killed He will rise three days later.’” Mk 9:34, “They will mock Him and spit on Him and scourge Him and kill Him and three days later He will rise again.” And you can just keep on reading. He has said this over and over and over again. And they said, “But it is the third day.” Oh, duh!

Luke 24:22, they continue, “But also some women among us amazed us.” Now, there has been some frustration here, confusion. “When they were at the tomb early in the morning and did not find His body they came saying that they had also seen a vision of angels who said that He was alive.” But then Lk 24:24, “Some of those who were with us went to the tomb and found it just exactly as the women also had said, but Him they did not see.” I don’t know if you see it or not, but these are very discouraged disciples. Let me tell you why. You see, they had a fleshly agenda.

The Jews believed that when Jesus came as the Messiah, when the Messiah came, He would set up His earthly kingdom, a powerful kingdom. Kind of like ethnic cleansing, He would kick out all the Gentiles. He would take the greatest of the Jews and put them on His right hand and His left hand and He would rule from that throne on earth. They just didn’t understand He was going to come first to die. That’s the way He was going to redeem Israel and the whole world, and then resurrect from the grave three days later. They conveniently shifted that over. Why? Because they had a fleshly agenda of what they wanted to see. The only way to get out from under the Roman domination was for Jesus to come as King and conquer and therefore set up His kingdom on earth. It was such an agenda that they did not pay attention to what He said.

You want to know where “foolishness” comes from? It’s from people that have a fleshly agenda. They have got strings attached. They will not pay attention to what God has said, and therefore they are frustrated. They are in despair. You come to Easter, it is just another day. Let’s have an Easter egg hunt and let’s have a nice meal with the family, and then it’s over. It’s done, it’s gone, and there is no joy. There is no real celebration in their hearts. Why? Because they have got an agenda and that agenda has hindered them from paying attention to what God has said.

I will be honest with you, I think that is the problem of Christianity in America today. Now, who am I? I don’t know, but others give their opinions; I’m going to give mine. I believe that is the problem. People come to church and say “I want to be entertained. What can you do for me? I want better this, I want better that, I want this, I want that.” And the reason is they have taken the Scriptures and said “That is archaic. You can’t build a church on teaching the Word of God. You have got to do something to entertain them, meet their felt needs. Let’s walk away from the Word of God.” And as a result of that, foolish living is probably more predominant today than it was with these disciples back in the day He had to address them on the Emmaus road. We’ve got an agenda; we have got a string attached to God. And we want what we want and we are not paying attention to what God has said.

Well, that is what foolishness is. But are you not glad God loves us even when we are foolish? I will ask you again, how many of you have been foolish this past year? Yes sir, me too. Aren’t you glad God loves us? How many times I have had an agenda and I would rather than pay attention to what His Word has to say, I would rather go make myself feel better or do something my flesh desires to do.

Well, the final thing I want you to see is a refreshing rebuke. You say, “How can a rebuke be refreshing?” Well, when Jesus does it, it’s always refreshing. I mean, the way He rebukes you and I, loving us like He does, makes us think that we have just been blessed, and we have been. Watch what happens here. Jesus says to them, Lk 24:25, “And He said to them” here comes the rebuke, “O foolish men [there’s our word] and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken.” The word “foolish” is our word that we have found in Galatians, [anoetos](#). It means without understanding, intentionally. He documents what we just said. We could have waited till He said this to say the reason for foolishness, but it’s already been implied. He documents it. He said to them “O foolish men, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken.” Now the word “slow” is the word [bradus](#). It is the word that means to intentionally delay something.

But now, listen, it doesn’t mean that you are slow and just can’t seem to get there and you are trying. No, no, no; this word means something else. This word means you intentionally are slow of heart. The word for “heart” there is the word referring to the place within us that we can’t put our hand on, but yet it’s where all of our decisions are made. You are slow of heart to do what? “To believe all that the prophets have spoken.” He said to them, “O foolish men and slow of heart, to believe all.” Do you realize that Isaiah was their greatest prophet, or at least in many people’s eyes? And do realize that Isaiah told them in Isaiah 53:6-11 he told them as clear as bell that all of our iniquities would put upon the Lord Jesus. It told them clear as a bell that God was pleased to crush His own Son for our behalf and that through Him many would be justified. It is as clear as a bell, but they refused, intentionally refused. Why? Because they had a fleshly agenda. And in doing so missed what God was trying to say in their life.

You see, that’s what foolishness is. And that rebuke had to come. You say, “How can that be refreshing?” Oh, listen, He did not just rebuke them, He walked with them now to the road to [- Emmaus](#). I don’t have the time to get into all of that. It’s such a beautiful story. He just walks along, and you know what He does? He takes those Scriptures that they had sort of pushed aside and begins to explain Himself all the way from Moses down to His day. And they thrilled in that. They get to Emmaus and when they get to Emmaus they beg Him to stay because it was getting late in the evening. And I want you to see the intimacy. What He did, He loved them through His word, by explaining His word back into His presence. I will promise you today, if you are living foolishly, God is already working on you. You haven’t seen Him yet; He has been all around you. He has been coming to you over and over and over again. He is trying to love you back into His presence where the intimacy can come back in your relationship with Him.

It says in Lk 24:30, “when He had reclined at the table with them, He took the bread and blessed it and breaking it He began giving it to them.” Boy, this is that picture of supping with Him and, and participating with Him. And then in Lk 24:31, oh I love this, “Then their eyes were opened and they recognized Him and He vanished from their sight.” Do you realize what our problem is this morning? We are so busy doing everything but what we should be doing—abiding with Him, getting into His presence, being willing to let His word teach us. And if we are not willing to give His word the time of day, next Easter will be the same song, third verse. I promise you, it will not get better, it will get worse.

But remember, He is after you. He is moving through people to try to woo you back into His presence. This is what Christianity offers that no religion touches. It offers the intimacy of fellowship with the Lord God Himself through His Son. And when you get into His presence suddenly you begin to realize how important the Scriptures are. All of those things you thought you wanted, you don’t want anymore. You just want what God’s Word has to say. You want to hear His Scripture explained to you, and that’s when that happens. And when you get to that place in His presence and listening to His Word, that’s when He opens your eyes to what He wants you to see.

Their eyes were opened. Lk 24:32 says, "They said to one another. 'Were not our hearts burning within us while He was speaking to us on the road, while He was explaining the Scriptures to us?' And they got up that very hour and returned to Jerusalem," seven miles, "and found gathered together the Eleven and those who were with them and they were saying, walking in saying, 'You are right. The Lord has really risen and has appeared to Simon.'" Well, bless their hearts, glad you affirmed it. You walked along with Him for awhile, you certainly know in your heart that He has been raised from the dead.

Well, I've got to close this thing down. But I want you to know, my heart goes out to somebody who is living foolishly today. I have lived that way too many times in my life and I know how you feel right now. It's like I don't have time for the Word of God. "Listen, Wayne, do something to make me feel better because I am in a mess that I created for myself." But I am telling you something, until you come back, God is loving you back into His presence. And when you begin to realize the intimacy of fellowship with Him and His Word, be willing to be taught, He will open your eyes as to what it is all about. And next Easter you will shout with the best of them because there will be a true celebration in your heart.

"Abiding with Me," Lk 24:29, I did not read, but I want to just go back and close with it. Lk 24:29, when we get there, it is about the end of day. It says, "But they urged Him." The King James version says something different here; it says "stay with us." They said, the King James says, "Abide with us," same word, "stay with us, for it is getting toward evening and the day is nearly over." Do you realize in a figurative sense, if you wanted to take it out of that and apply it, our life is a day? The time we were born begins the day and then the time that we die ends the day. Maybe the time that we were born from above starts the day, then the time we die ends the day. Do you realize what in a figurative sense "abide with me," how important it becomes? The older you get the more you begin to realize how short life really is. Stop playing games with God and say, "Oh, God, I want to abide with You, but will You abide with me?"

There is a hymn that I want to share with you as I close. Now I like hymns. You need to know these hymns. They were born out of despair, and they were born out of trouble, and they are the doctrinal hymns. Every revival ever recorded was based upon the Word and doctrinal hymns. Let me show you one. It is called "[Abide With Me.](#)" [Henry Francis Lyte \(1793-1847\)](#) lived from 1793 to 1847. He died in 1847. The author of this text "Abide with Me," Henry F. Lyte, was an Anglican pastor. Though he battled tuberculosis all of his life, Lyte was known as a man strong in spirit and in faith. It was he who coined the phrase, "It is better to wear out than to rust out." During his later years Lyte's health progressively worsened so that he was forced to seek a warmer climate in Italy. For the last sermon and with his parishioners at Lower Brixham, England, was September 4, 1847. It is recorded that he nearly had to crawl to the pulpit.

His final words made a deep impact upon his people when he proclaimed,

"It is my desire to induce you to prepare for the solemn hour which must come to all by a timely appreciation and dependence upon the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

Henry Lyte's inspiration for writing "Abide with Me" came shortly before his final sermon ([Read story behind this great hymn](#)). While reading from the account in Luke 24:29 of our Lord's appearance with the two disciples on their seven mile walk from Jerusalem to the village of Emmaus on that first Easter evening. How the hearts of those discouraged disciples suddenly burned within them when they realized that they were in the accompanying of the risen eternal Son of God."

And listen to the words of this great hymn ([play this beautiful vocal version](#)).

Abide with me, fast falls the even tide,
the darkness deepens. Lord, with me abide
when other helpers fail and comforts flee,
help of the helpless, O abide with me.
Swift to its close ebbs out life's little day,
earth's joys grow dim. Its glories pass away.

Change and decay and all around I see

O Thou who changest not abide with me.
I need Thy presence every passing hour.
What but Thy grace can foil the tempters power?

Who like Thyself my God and stay can be?

Through cloud and sunshine, O, abide with me.

Hold Thou Thy word before my closing eyes.

Shine through the gloom and point me to the skies.

Heavens morning breaks and earth's vane shadows flee.

In life, in death, O Lord, abide with me."

That's what Christianity offers us, the opportunity to be in His presence every day of our life, every minute, every moment and the opportunity to be taught in His Word and to understand so He can open our eyes. That's not religion, folks; religion will not cut it. But Christianity is a relationship. You don't have to prove anything, or measure up. You just enjoy Him till Jesus comes back. Living and walking with Him moment by moment. Are you living foolishly this morning? Have you put the word on a shelf, it has dust on it? You come to church once a year, is that what you are doing today? Are you living foolishly?

Well, God loves you, God loves you and He has been after you for a long time. He is loving you back into His presence to enjoy a relationship that you have not enjoyed for quite a while. It is all yours to have. It is all yours to have.

Galatians 3:2-5 The Foolishness of Denying Christ

So what is this foolishness we're talking about? It's when we know something but we choose to willfully ignore it. So it's out of sheer frustration that Paul says, "O foolish Galatians." He didn't mean to demean them. That's not what he's doing.



Turn with me today to Galatians 3:1, and this really Part 2 of what we began last week. Galatians 3:1. Now, I hope you understand what Paul is doing here. If a believer, you or me, we chose to walk away from the relationship, intimacy, moment by moment depending upon Christ, and we choose to go back to a works mentality, a religious mindset; if the apostle Paul was living today he would stand here and say, "O foolish people." That's what he would say. You say, "How do you know that?" Because that's exactly what he said to the Galatians, and that's exactly what they did. He says in Galatians 3:1, "O foolish Galatians."

Now, we learned last week that word "foolish" is the word *anoetos*. It's an interesting little word. It means without understanding; "a," which means without, and then *noetos*, which mean to understand, without understanding, when you are ignorant of something. But the interesting thing about this word that we discovered is that this is an intentional ignorance. It is ignoring what you already know. It's not something that you do not know; it's ignoring what you do know. I call it stupidity, but then, I don't want to be offensive with that. I keep remembering how my mother said don't call anything stupid. But I don't know anything else to call it. I'm serious. If you know something and you do something differently that's just stupid. Now if you don't know, that's ignorance. But if you do know and you choose to do it anyway, that is stupidity. That's my definition, so again, I apologize if I's offensive to anyone. I just call it stupid. "O stupid Galatians" is what he says.

We saw last time that Jesus actually uses this same phrase to two of His disciples walking down the road to Emmaus on Resurrection Sunday morning. When they should have been celebrating, Jesus is alive, they're walking down the road talking only about His death on the cross. And Jesus just came along and walked with them. He kept them from seeing who He was. They couldn't discern that. And so He just started to ask them some questions and then He said to them, "O foolish ones," He said, "slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken." In other words, you have looked at the Bible as a cafeteria line. You grab what you wanted to believe, but you didn't believe all that the prophets have spoken.

And that term "slow of heart" means to intentionally delay making a choice. They knew that the prophets had spoken, but they just had an agenda didn't they? Their agenda was they wanted Jesus to rule on this earth and set up His kingdom, kick the Gentiles out and everything would be wonderful. They didn't understand; or if they did understand, they just ignored. They chose not to pay attention to Isaiah 53 and all of their prophets that said Jesus had to die on the cross.

So what is this foolishness we're talking about? It's when we know something but we choose to willfully ignore it. So it's out of sheer frustration that Paul says, "O foolish Galatians." He didn't mean to demean them. That's not what he's doing. How many of you here have had teenagers at some point in your life? Now, do I have to explain anymore about what he is doing? Now how many times have you told your child over and over and they know better, but they do it anyway? And you look at them and you understand what

he's doing here. He's just exasperated.

Here is a teacher of the Word of grace and here these people he has taught walking away from it. Paul had clearly stated in Gal 2:21, "I do not nullify the grace of God." He says, "For if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died needlessly." Do you realize what these Galatians have done and what we do when we choose to go back to this performance mentality, trying to earn our righteousness and righteousness is only in Christ? When we do that we actually, unwittingly what we do, we declare the death of Jesus Christ as being totally unnecessary. And that's his point. You can't have religion and Christianity and have them peacefully co-exist. They are two different things all together.

Religion denies the death of the Lord Jesus Christ. Why do I say that? Because it depends upon our works rather than depending upon what He did for us at the cross. By buying into the religious mentality they rendered the death of Jesus on the cross as needless. So Paul says in Galatians 3:1-3, "You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing and with faith? Are you so foolish having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?"

Now we want to continue today to look and see what this foolish living is all about. We need to understand this. If for no other reason, at least you will know where you are in your walk with the Lord Jesus Christ by what's going on inside and outside around you.

First of all, we have the situation. That is the first thing he identifies here, the situation. How many times have you heard me say, "sin will take you further than you ever want to stray, keep you longer than you ever intended to stay, and cost you more than you ever dreamed you would pay"? That's exactly what's happening here. By saying, "O foolish Galatians," again, he is accusing them of intentionally ignoring what they had learned and experienced about the message of grace.

Now, maybe you've just joined us today and you don't really know the background. Let me just give you one verse to help you to see what happened. These religious false teachers had come into the southern Galatia and had deceived these people. And Paul has said, way back in 1:6, "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel." They had bought into deception. They had bought into this message "I have got to do something to earn or to measure up to what God wants in my life." They had been deceived by the teachers of law. And therefore they had nullified the relationship that God offered them in Christ.

Now, when any believer is foolish in their walk, any believer today or back then, immediately his whole behavior begins to change. Have you ever wondered how a believer can be so excited about Jesus one time and you see them six months later and all of a sudden there is something completely different about them? There is no joy in their life. They are condemning and critical, etc. Now, there is going to be a behavioral change when we choose to go back to religion. Now what we are going to see is when the rubber meets the road. This is when it gets down to brass tacks. This is going to get a little tough; I want you to know that ahead of time. And what we are going to say today is nothing compared to what is coming. I mean, I am just going to tell you. He is going to dig deep and he is going to show us what happens when we choose to live foolish lives.

Paul says this by asking a question. He says, "Who has bewitched you?" Now that little word **bewitched** is very picturesque. It is the word [*baskaino*](#). It means to put somebody under a spell. When I was studying this word I was amazed to find that it was used with people, superstitious people, like in black magic, put somebody under a spell. And in the Old Testament when it was talked about giving an evil eye and their superstition when it was put in the Septuagint it would be, the word [*baskaino*](#), their superstition would say that you could an evil eye on somebody and put them under a spell. That is where the word comes from. Who has put you under their spell?

But I found something very interesting. There is also the use of the word which means to puff somebody up by false words, to sort of walk around and say, "Oh, man, I just really appreciate you," but you know good and well you don't, and you begin to start building somebody up with false words. Now think about that for a second. Why would Paul, under the leadership of the Holy Spirit, choose this particular word to describe what has happened to the Galatian people? He compares being deceived and impressed with yourself falsely with witchcraft. He says you are under a spell. Somebody has duped you.

In other words, what has happened is when you are into religious works you can look at yourself and say, "Man, I am really spiritual. I had my quiet time four times in the last two days. I passed out 75 tracts on Thursday afternoon at 4:00. I have done all that; look, look how spiritual I am." And Paul compares that kind of false ego, he compares that to witchcraft. You see religious works, look, our flesh loves it because it loves the credit. It wants to do something for God.

"Give me a list of things I can do. Don't tell me I have to relate to God. That's too hard, because if I relate to Him I have to see my own sinfulness. But if I can do something for Him that sure is a better way for me." And Paul said, "Who has bewitched you? Who has put this spell over you that makes you think you can do anything for God other than bow before Him?" It had totally changed

their whole behavior, totally changed their behavior. They lived now as if they had never heard Paul say a single word.

Now let me explain this behavioral change in a little bit different way. You can be foolish before salvation, and certainly you can be foolish after salvation. Foolishness is foolishness no matter which side of the cross you look at. And it always has the same progressive downhill plunge. You will see it on both sides of the cross. Let me show you that. Look in Titus 3:3. Paul uses this word again. He talks about the time back when he was a religious man. And he says something to Titus that is very important here. It says, "For we also once were foolish ourselves." Now Paul takes us back to the time that he was a lost man, a religious man, but a lost man. He says, "We were once foolish ourselves." Now he is going to add some words to this to help you better understand what goes along with this foolishness, where the behavioral change begins to take place.

He adds the word "disobedient." That's the next word. When you are foolish you are going to be disobedient. That word "disobedient" is the word *apeithes*. It is the word "*a*," without; and then *peithes*, which means the willingness to be persuaded by truth. In other words, he says when I was foolish I was unwilling to let truth persuade me. I was unwilling to let truth change me; therefore, I was a foolish man. So disobedient and foolish go right along hand in hand. He may have known the truth, but he was unwilling to let the truth change his life. Foolish Christians are those who know better but refuse to be persuaded by the truth that they already know.

Then he uses another word in Titus that describes this word "foolish." He uses the word "deceived." Now, that word "deceived" is the word *planao*. It means to wander around, to be led astray. We get the word planet from it. It's kind of, in my definition it's like a person who is in outer space; he just wanders around. He's wishy-washy. He doesn't know where he is. I love that term mugwump, a bird that sits on a fence with his mug on one side and his wump on the other and never can make up his mind which side he wants to go. Well, that's kind of the way this person is. Do you know anybody like that? They claim to be a believer; they said they had received Jesus in their heart; but they don't know where they're going and they don't even know where they are in their Christian walk. They are wishy-washy. One day they are hot and one day they are cold. They, you just cannot seem to predict where they are going to go.

This is a behavioral change that comes when you go back to that old foolish way of living. But now, when that condition begins to be rooted in our lives, the behavioral change is immediate. First of all, we become slaves to sin. It says in Titus 3:3 (note), "enslaved to various lusts and pleasures." Wow! The very thing he has chosen, now it becomes his master. When you choose to walk after the flesh, whether it be religious, or rebellious, it is going to control you. It is going to take over in your life. And as a result of that, the sin is rampant.

Have you ever seen a believer who has a particular sin, he has falling into that trap and now it somehow is overbearing in his life? That's what he's trying to say. If you go the religious route that's what's going to happen somewhere down the road. You're going to end up being a slave to sin. You say, "I do not quite understand this." Well, just ignore the truth that you know right now and you will understand it very quickly. You will become a slave to the very thing you have chosen to obey. That's what Romans 6 talks about. He says whoever you submit yourself to, it becomes your master (Ro 6:16-note). But this behavioral change, it starts inwardly. The joy is gone. You do not even know where you are anymore. Church doesn't do anything for you. Every Christian is wrong except for you. I mean it's a bad state to be in. You are enslaved to the very sin that you have chosen.

But then it begins to show outwardly. Now inwardly it is the slavery, but outwardly you begin to realize it shows up in your relationships. He goes on to say in Titus 3:3 (note), "Spending our life in malice and envy, hateful and hating one another." Have you ever wondered how a church could split? Have you ever wondered about that? How Christians that have been changed and converted by the blood of Jesus can all of a sudden become so mean and they can become so divisive and critical and judgmental and it can even split a church; have you ever wondered about that? Well, it's easy. When people choose to ignore truth and they choose not to let it change their lives, it's going to change their behavior. And it's going to show up in their relationships.

I understand right now three out of every four marriages end in divorce (See [Divorce Stats - Barna](#)). And I found out the other day that one of the surveys said that most of these people getting divorced are claiming to be believers. How can a husband and wife that enter into a covenant so quickly divide and walk away from each other, hateful and hating one another? It's very easy. You can hear truth till you fall over in the floor. I can hear it. I mean, it doesn't mean just you, that's all of us. And if we choose to ignore it, we are going to choose a foolish way of living. As a result we are going to become a slave to whatever it is we have chosen, and it's going to show up in our relationships.

Believers act as if they are under a spell when they go back to that religious mentality. And I want to share with you over and over and over again, religion offers you nothing, folks, no promise of the future. It offers you nothing but blood, sweat and tears. And I guarantee you there is a rung on that ladder you will never be able to attain. But Christ has accomplished every bit of that for you. And all we need to understand is—if we will just open our eyes—is just to bow before Him and let the One who can do it and will do it, do it through our lives. That's what grace is all about.

And what Paul is trying to do by saying, “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you,” he’s bringing them back to some sanity here. He’s trying to show them you are in the state that you are in because you have willfully ignored the truth of what sets you free. There’s a definite character that is produced when you are living under grace in contrast to what happens to us when we choose to walk after the flesh. Religious people do not relate. They ruin relationships. But Christ in us builds relationships. In Gal 5:22 which we will get to, when we get there we are going to look at the character He produces in our life. The fruit of the Spirit working in our life is love, joy, peace, and you know the list. And all of these other things characterize that love. But that love is dismissed. That love is gone when we choose to walk and live a foolish lifestyle. When we choose to ignore grace we ruin relationships.

Now he says, “Who has bewitched you?” Now, this is most interesting. That little word “who”—and you know my mind; I’ve got to look at every word—“who” is in the singular there in the Greek. It’s the word *tis*. It refers to someone the author either does not know, or he chooses not to mention by name. And I don’t know what the situation is here. Knowing the apostle Paul, he probably knew who it was and just chose not to mention it. I don’t know if that’s true or not. But whoever this person was, he had many people doing his bidding. It doesn’t take but one person; that’s all it takes to propagate error, and that error begins to ruin relationships. And as a result of that the churches begin to falter in the midst of it. It only takes one.

Now we don’t know who this guy is, like I said, but everybody was up under his spell. You know, I tell you what, he must have been pretty good doing what he is doing. If he could affect every church in all of southern Galatia just by what he came up with and tried to put them back up under the Mosaic Law, man, he must have been good. He must have had the charisma. He must have had the looks. He must have had whatever it was that it took to captivate people and make them feel better about themselves, that if they would go to work for God rather than let God work through them, that that would be the best route, whoever it was. And by the way, it only takes one, it only takes one.

Well, Paul had to say to them in Gal 4:15, as a result of their buying into what this guy had said, it says, “Where then is that sense of blessing that you had?” You have had a complete behavioral change. You’re not the same people that I used to know when I was with you, Paul said. “O foolish Galatians. Who has put you under their spell?” I will tell you, folks, don’t ever think that you are beyond being deceived back into works. It’s such a subtle thing. The moment you pick and choose anything to depend upon other than Christ and His Word, you have just made a serious mistake.

When I was at one church, people wanted to make us a mission-minded church and be known for missions. Others wanted us to be known for evangelism. Others wanted us to be known for teaching the Word. But I am telling you, folks, there’s a trap in all three of those. We need to be known for a Christ-centered church and the more we are focused on Him the more we are focused on missions. The more we are focused on Him the more we are focused on the Word. The more we are focused on Him the more we are focused on evangelism. But if anything clouds that focus, and you begin to put your dependence into anything other than the Lord Jesus having already accomplished what you are trying to accomplish and His sufficiency in your life, then at that very moment you have chosen a foolish thing, even though it looks good in the eyes of other people.

It is a very deceitful, subtle thing to get back up under the mentality of works. You begin to depend upon what you can do for God rather than what God wants to do through you. I have done it. Has anybody else done it besides me? Some of you just say, “Well, I’m not about to tell you. And your wife is sitting there saying, “Yeah, I know good and well you have, because I watch you at home.”

You see the great revivals that happened in the northern part of New York, by Charles Finney. Oh, my goodness! Charles Finney, up in the northern part of the state of New York, preached his heart out and there were revivals everywhere. But I was at a conference up in New York and they took me out to show what had happened. What is the result now? We were going up there now preaching the same message that he preached years ago, and we found the churches with chains and padlocks on them. And I said, “What in the world happened? This was where revival once took place.” They said the church went back to religion, they formalized and they died. God wrote “Ichabod” (means “the glory has departed” - 1Sa 4:21) over every one of them. You see, folks, religion can’t do it. And religion and Christianity cannot peacefully co-exist.

So what is the situation there in Galatia? He says “O foolish Galatians!” How many times in my life has he had to say, “Oh, foolish Wayne, who has bewitched you? Who has put you under their spell? Wayne, you are spinning your wheels trying to do what you already know you cannot do. Why don’t you just let Me do it in and through you?” I wonder if that’s your situation this morning. Who has bewitched you? You are living behaviorally as if you have never even heard the message of grace. What’s happened?

Well, secondly, we have the humiliation. It’s a very humiliating thing when a person has been saved by grace, they participated in that grace and then they choose to walk away from it. Take me a moment or two to develop this. When a preacher preaches truth like Paul and he sees the people respond to it, and he sees their lives changed and then he sees them turn and go back to that old religious mindset where he has been himself; that’s a very aggravating thing. I sensed this aggravation when Paul says, “O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?” Then he says “Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.”

Now, this verse doesn’t mean that they were there at the crucifixion. If you read it very carelessly that’s what it is going to look like.

That's not what he is saying. The little phrase "publically portrayed" is the key to the whole thing. The words "publically portrayed" are actually one word in the Greek. It's **prographo** ([see "Notes" for discussion](#)). **Prographo** means to set forth clearly by public proclamation. It means to say something in a preaching manner, in a speaking manner to where people see it so clearly it's as if they were actually there. The word can mean to portray, to draw a picture. And the apostle Paul says, "When I came to you and when I preached the marvelous message of grace," he said, "you saw it." You saw it as if you were there. And in that very moment that's the thing that broke your heart, when you realized that Jesus had to come and die for your sin.

All of a sudden all the religious direction you have ever had in your life disappeared and fell away, because you realized only Jesus and what He did on the cross could in any way ever effect our salvation. And that broke your heart and you saw it. It was clearly portrayed as I preached to you and you bowed before Him and you received the resurrected Christ into your heart. They had clearly seen it. This is the heart that is ripped out when a preacher preaches the message and people have seen it; they have seen it. They have been changed by it. And so now what they have done is turned back to a religious mindset which has in effect humiliated Paul; they have humiliated the Lord Jesus; they have humiliated the message itself by turning back. You were changed by that, Paul said. It's so humiliating.

Now, let us make certain we understand this. For us to go back to an old works mentality—I keep saying this, somehow before Galatians is over you will understand it, I guarantee it because Paul is not going to let us off the hook. He is going to keep bringing us back, keep bringing it back, keep bringing it back. When I am trying to do it for myself, when I come up with a great idea and ask God to bless it, I have just humiliated the message of grace.

I wonder if we hear the seriousness of this today. Do you recognize that the percentage of churches in America, particularly, that have bought back into that old religious mindset? Legalism is rampant. There are church buildings that are built in many places under guilt. People are afraid not to give because the preacher said it is going to cost you in your rewards one day when you stand before Jesus, and that guilt mindset comes over them. As a result of it their behavior changes, and they lose that sense of love and they lose that sense of the fullness of Christ and experiencing Him day by day. They literally humiliate the message of grace. They humiliate Him dying on the cross for their sins.

Well, there are those who are doing just that. Paul says in Philippians 3:18-note, "For many walk of whom I have often told you and now tell you even weeping, that they are enemies of the cross of Christ." Paul said there are many, there are many. Now that was true in his day in Philippi, it is also true today in our day. He even identifies them in Philippians 3:1-note. He says "Finally, my brethren, rejoice in the Lord." Again he says, "To write the same things again is no trouble to me and is a safeguard to you." And then he says, "**Beware** (present imperative) of the dogs." (Php 3:2-note) Whoa, Paul, that's a little tough is it not. He calls these religious people dogs. It's interesting that in the gospels the Gentiles were called dogs. He is calling the Jews here, the Judaizers that say you have to be circumcised, the law of Moses, that's the way to righteousness. He says, "Beware of the evil workers, beware of the false circumcision."

Folks, I don't know how to say it, but they are everywhere. And they use the name of Jesus; and they will put it right up in front of them and you are constantly hearing them on tape and you are watching them on television and you are reading their books. I want you to know, filter through what's being said and find the root of where it's coming from. If it has anything to do with me trying to better myself in God's eyes, then automatically you are hearing a wrong message. The message is Wayne comes before God and offers Him only one thing, sin, unworthiness, pride. And God says thank you for being honest. I have never said you were any different. Now let Me exchange My presence, My fullness, My character. And that's what the Christian life is all about. That's the message of grace: not me doing for Him, but Christ being free to do and be in and through me.

It is humiliating to the whole message of grace when we try to do something for God and ask Him to bless it. It's humiliating. But when we just get in touch with Him ministry is received, it is not achieved. That's the difference. When this hit me it dawned on me that even though it has to be taught, it also has to be caught. And a little chain pulled in my mind. And it was like a light came on, and I have never been the same. That was 26 years ago in my life. It has been incredible the adventure since that time. Oh, have there been times that I have chosen to be foolish? Absolutely, I could write a book on how to do it. But every time God brings me right back to the message that is so overwhelming in my life. And that is Jesus being Jesus in me. And that's what Paul is trying to say to these Galatians. "Who has bewitched you? Who has put you under a spell? You understood when I preached it to you that Christ died for your sins. What are you doing trying to add to what He has already done?"

And then finally, we have the illustration. He wants to make sure we fully grasp what he is saying. Paul does not want anybody to be confused so he says in Gal 3:2 and 3—he has some questions here—but it says everything he wants to say. Gal 3:2: "This is the only thing I want to find out from you, did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?" Now, this question is to you this morning also. It's to all of us. And this question is critical to his whole argument. He wants to know, how did you become a believer? How did you do that? "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the flesh, or the law, or by hearing with faith?"

You see, receiving the Spirit, by the way, is salvation. Isn't that a beautiful picture? Not earning, but receiving, receiving the Spirit;

when you asked Jesus to come and live in your heart, receiving Him into your heart. Did you do that by the works that you earned the right to do it, or did you do it by faith? Did you realize that you couldn't save yourself and you cast yourself upon Him and you cried out to Him and received Him into your heart? You see, if you didn't do that way, then what did? He says, "By hearing with faith or by the works of the law?" He puts a contrast here. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith? Hearing with faith, obviously. Everybody knows the answer to that. They knew the answer to that. Faith in Christ is the only means of salvation. There is no other means.

I mean, there are some people who say, "Oh, no, no, no, no. You can worship the school bus if you want to, I mean you can believe anything you want to believe. Everybody believes." No. Jesus is the only way of salvation. And receiving Him by faith is the only way to be saved. Hearing with faith is important. The word "hearing" is the word *akoe*, which means hear and fully understand. Do you realize that is the thing I pray more than anything else when we preach, that people hear, but they understand. I can't give that understanding. The Holy Spirit has got to give that understanding. To hear and fully understand. Then the word "with." Hearing "with faith" is not the word "with," it's the word *ek*. It means out of faith. You see, the faith comes out of the hearing and the understanding. When you hear and you understand, within that is the faith to believe it.

You might be here this morning, you have never received Jesus as your Lord and Savior. And suddenly it is beginning to come clear to you what He came to do. He came to live in you. That's what [[salvation]] is all about, not just to get you out of [[hell]]. He came to bring heaven to put it inside of you. And when you begin to see that, at that very moment, if you have never received Jesus, at that very moment of hearing and understanding, there is the ability to receive it. The faith is there. Romans 10:17 says the same thing. "So faith comes from hearing [and it's the same word] and hearing by the word of Christ." And the word "from" there is not "from," it is out of. Born in the understanding, born in the message that is understood comes the ability to receive it.

Paul has preached the word of God to the Galatians. And as he began to preach it, God took over and gave them understanding. And as they began to understand and were broken by the crucifixion of Jesus and His resurrection, and the gospel message, they reached out and they received Jesus into their life. So Paul is reminding them of this. And he wants them to understand, how did you receive Christ? Go back to the root. You did not receive Him by any works you did. You received it by faith; when you heard the message it was clearly understood.

He says in Gal 3:3, after saying this now, and asking that question, he says, "Are you so foolish?" because he already knows the answer, and he knows they know the answer. He says, "Are you so foolish?" Are you so stupid? Are you so intentionally ignorant that "having begun by the Spirit now you are being perfected by the flesh?" Don't you love that word picture, "having begun"? When you receive Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior it is a beginning, not an ending. Isn't that awesome! The journey began. I love that. Just think, some people say, well, this Christianity is getting old. But buddy you don't know the Christ I know. I mean, every day is a fresh day. Every day is a brand new day on the journey. And it is a beginning and it goes on for all of eternity.

"Having begun by the Spirit," he says "are you now trying to be perfected by the flesh?" And that word "perfected" there is the idea of accomplishing something. Are you trying to accomplish a righteous lifestyle by your own efforts when you already know you couldn't accomplish [[salvation]] by your own efforts? He says, somehow this doesn't mix it; you've got to come back. The very thing that saved you is the very thing that sustains you, Christ in you. Philippians 1:6 says, "For I am confident of this very thing that He who began a good work in you [same idea] will perfect it [same exact word, He will accomplish it] until the day of Christ Jesus."

You know, sometimes I feel so frail and I just can't seem to verbalize what gets inside of me. I'm just trusting God is going to pull the chain in somebody's understanding and they're going to say, "Whoa, wait a minute, Jesus lives in me! You mean to tell me all I need to do is get to know Him, be in His presence, let His word renew my mind, transform my life? You mean to tell me when I start living as a vessel before Him I don't have to worry about the works, that He will do the works through me?" That's exactly it. That's Christianity. But when I have to come over here and come up with it, when I have to feel like if I've missed my quiet time, somehow God is displeased with me, when I have to believe that if I didn't witness to somebody yesterday I'm not a real true spiritual person, I have just put myself back into the most terrible tragedy, tragic situation that I can think of. You see, that's what religion does. It puts it up to you. Under grace it's up to Him. Under law it's up to us.

These Galatian believers knew good and well what Paul was saying. They knew the answers. He's just having to bring them back to sanity. In fact, they had lived this way at one time.

Gal 3:4 says, "Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? You know what he is referring to? He is referring back to Acts 14 when the church was first formulated and they experienced grace and how they were persecuted for living under grace. And the very people that persecuted them are now the ones that they have bought back into and they have completely forgotten. Boy, have they been bewitched. "Who has bewitched you?" You're living as if you don't have a clue. You're living as if you're under a spell. They were bewitched.

Let me ask you a question. Anybody here ever been bewitched in your Christian journey at all at any time? Anybody besides me?

Well, I guarantee you, you've been bewitched. Every one of us has. We ought to know this trap very well. If you have walked with God for any period of time you already know what we're talking about here. The very moment that you begin to be overwhelmed by what you need to do rather than what God can do through you, you have just been duped. No, sir, it, it's in God. And God orchestrates life to drive us to this truth. Do you realize that? He puts us in circumstances that are so overwhelming we have to depend up on Him. And when we depend upon Him we watch Him do what we know we can't do and it just is awesome. And that's what begins to rekindle the message.

Well, it is amazing what we think we can do to bless God. I can give you a lot of examples. But my time is running out. The situation: they have been bewitched. Who has put a spell on them? The humiliation: by what they have done they slapped God in the face, they slapped the message in the face, they have slapped Paul in the face, they have slapped Christianity in the face and they have gone back to that old religious mindset. The old rotten flesh now is in control. And their relationships are completely ruined. You ever wonder how you can say such judgmental and critical things towards somebody and then turn right around and say you love Jesus in the same breath? That's a foolish man. That's a foolish believer, a woman or a man. That's foolishness. It's going to have a behavioral change in your life when you choose not to let Jesus be Jesus in you.

Galatians 3:2-7 The Means of our Salvation



The means of salvation and the means of sanctification is a Person, not a system of works, but a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. And I want to make sure we understand this in the message of Galatians. He is the good news.

Well, turn with me today to Galatians 3. And today we are going to begin with Gal 3:6. It's awesome what Paul is doing here at the freedom we have under grace. And to introduce this, let me begin to share the means of our salvation and the means of our sanctification. Now, what do I mean by sanctification? The way we live day by day, holy living. Living up to that which God says we already are. The means of salvation and the means of sanctification is a Person, not a system of works, but a Person, and that Person is the Lord Jesus Christ. And I want to make sure we understand this in the message of Galatians. He is the good news.

Now, I want to explain something to you. There's a lot of moral good that law can bring. Now see, contrary to public opinion, there's a lot of moral good. It produces an outward behavior that is moral and ethical. It can do that. So to some people that's good news. A religion at least causes a person to have boundaries in which to live. It at least puts a fear in his heart that if he does not do this, or he must do this, and certainly there is some good to that. You take a pagan society and you put religion into it, at least there is some good that it directs a person towards. But remember, back in Gal 1:6—I want to make certain that we understand this—Paul says, “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel.” And then he says in Gal 1:7, “which is really not another.”

The reason I'm bringing you back to this is because the word “gospel” is the word *euaggelion*. The word *euaggelion* is the word for message, and *eu* for good; good message, good news. And what he's saying here is, you have walked away from Him for a different form of good news. You see, these people thought they were hearing good news. And to some degree there is some truth to that.

Paul uses two words however in Gal 3:6-7 that shows you a difference that we need to understand. And first of all he uses the word “different” in Gal 3:6. That is the word *heteros*. *Heteros* is the word that means of a different kind, of a different species. Humans are not in the same species as other creatures, so to say of a different kind, of a different species. “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ for a different gospel,” one that is good, good news, but of a different kind. See, what they had bought into was it was another form of good news, but it was not of the same kind. I want to make sure you understand what I am saying.

There is good around us, but not anywhere close to the good news of the Lord Jesus Christ. Gal 3:7, the word for “another,” he says, “Which is really not another.” It is a different Greek word, it is the word *allos*, and that means of the same kind, of the same kind. They had believed what they thought to be good news, and to some degree it was, but it didn't come close to measuring to the good news that the Lord Jesus brings to us, that which He wants. He wants to come and live in and through us. And when you compare what we try to do for God to Him living in and through us there, the difference is amazing. They are not even of the same kind. This might be good, it might help your behavior, but over here you have the ultimate. You have the Lord Jesus who wants to produce in you what you can never produce yourselves.

What I want you to see is that the Galatian believers didn't buy into something that was an immoral heresy. They didn't buy into

something that was an intentional heresy. They bought into what they thought was good. And what they bought into could change them on the outside, but it couldn't come close to changing them on the inside, and that is what we have got to see. So many believers today have settled for what they call good, but they have missed the good news of the Lord Jesus living His life in and through us. Oh, so many people will grab anything that has rules to it. That's fine. When you submit to Jesus you're still submissive to His Word. You don't throw that out. But, you see, it's learning to say "I can't, but, God, You never said I could. You can and You always said You would." Christ living in us. Christ is not only the means of salvation, He is the means of sanctification. I can't love other people, but He can love them through me.

I can't, now listen, by the law I can have my quiet time at 4:00 in the morning; I can have a journal; I can study Scripture; and those things are good, but they don't accomplish what only Christ can accomplish. When you marry the two you have got a powerful truth. If you are trying to accomplish today through good works what God wants you to be and to do through sincere efforts, you have completely missed what Christianity is. Christianity is not me doing for God. It's God living in me, doing through me what He already knows—and I should understand—that I can't do.

Now Paul continues to show this in Galatians 3. This is the reason for the writing of the book of Galatians. They bought a system of works and walked away from the Person who accomplishes all that He demands. In Gal 3:1-5 he addressed the stupidity of the Galatians. As a matter of fact, somebody said to me, you ought to call that SOS—stuck on stupid. That's how he addresses the Galatians. They couldn't get off of stupid. They just kept buying into the system and walking away from the relationship and from the Person. They bought into moral good and ethical good, but they missed the good news of what Christ wanted to do in them. Flesh cannot produce anything that God will ever approve of as long as you live. It will not produce it. But flesh can bow down and then let Jesus be Jesus in us.

Now, let's zero on his argument. Gal 3:6 is where we start today. Gal 3:6 says, "Even so, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now what Paul does here is so exciting. Like a lawyer he brings in his key witness. I mean, this is not the genius of Paul. This is the genius of the Holy Spirit of God that lives in Paul. Abraham is the hero of all the Jewish people. The Judaizers who were deceiving the Galatian people, this was their hero, Abraham. And they would say it reverently, "Abraham," you see. And Paul brings him up, and he brings him up to show that through Abraham his truth that he has been presenting to them is documented and founded. As a matter of fact, we see it proven in Abraham's life.

Well, like the lawyer building a case he brings forth his key witness. I used to like to watch *Perry Mason* when I was growing up. I find that every now and then when I'm flipping through and I have some time to watch TV. I love *Perry Mason* for two reasons. One is you never know who did it; and two is you will never know who's going to be that key witness that's going to break the whole thing wide open. You have to watch the whole time. I mean, you can't leave it. You've got to stay with it. What an ingenious way that they made that program. Well, this is what happens here. He brings his key witness in and says, "okay guys, argue with Abraham. You want to argue with me, that is fine; but now let's see you argue with Abraham."

First of all we have an unquestionable example. I mean, Abraham dismisses all doubt that salvation is by faith alone, in Christ alone, and sanctification is also by living to trust Him. To better understand Galatians 3:6 I am going to ask you to do something. I want you to turn back to Romans 4. Now we are going to flipflop back and forth through these two passages. Remember, Romans is a commentary on Galatians. Galatians is Paul writing Romans mad. And what he does, he gives the details in Romans; he makes the statements in Galatians. So let's go back to Romans 4 and let's just see what we find here about Abraham.

He brings him up. He says "And Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," in Galatians. So let's just see some things about Abraham. Romans 4 and we'll begin with Ro 4:1. Paul says, "What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?" Now, the term "our" in the little phrase, "our forefather," is Paul is putting himself into that picture. Why is he doing that? Well, it's very smart. Paul is identifying in Romans with those who are Jewish. He's not doing that in Galatians, but he is in Romans. And so he himself is a Jew. And what he's going to do here is "our forefather"; he immediately identifies with the people that are disagreeing with his doctrine. And he said, "our forefather." Paul had to be justified by faith and he wants to put himself into their midst so they can begin to understand this truth. So he says, "our forefather according to the flesh." Now that word "forefather" is the word *propater*. It's a relationship word. All Jewish people that were pure Jews could trace their lineage back to Abraham. They were physically related to Abraham.

Now, I have brought this up several times recently and I have noticed some people are not quite connecting yet. They don't understand what you are talking about. So at the risk of oversimplifying it, let me go back and rerun this one more time. In Genesis 3, man sinned. Now, all of us know that. That's why the liberals want to throw out the first 11 chapters of Genesis, because if you do you really have no Bible. You have no reason for redemption. You have no fall. You have no judgment. It is all in those first 11 chapters. And in the third chapter Adam sinned. Immediately when he did, it was taken and accounted to all humanity, his sin. In other words, it entered the bloodstream of humanity. Every person is born into sin because Adam sinned. All the world, yet unborn, immediately was affected. It is a virus in this world. It's the virus of sin. But God has had a plan since before the foundations of the

world. And in Genesis 12 God singles out one man by the name of Abram. He did not become Abraham until Genesis 17. And that “h” in his name is the Yahweh sound. He made covenant with Him and He became Abraham. And in Genesis 15, He covenanted with this man.

Now, this man was not worthy. Grace is not about us being worthy. God had a plan. And so He covenanted with Abraham. And He promised to him that a Redeemer was going to come one day. He promised him a land. He promised him a nation. But He promised him a seed, a human seed. A man was going to be born through this nation. You see, there was going to be a land they would dwell in, and there would be a people; but it was through this people that the seed would come. Now we’re going to see later on that seed is the Lord Jesus Christ. God revealed the gospel to Abraham back in Genesis 15, and Abraham believed and it was because of that belief he was saved. Genesis 15:6, which Paul quotes in Galatians 3:6, says, “Then he believed in the Lord and He [God] reckoned it to him as righteousness.”

Now, I want you to understand that salvation in the Old Testament is the same way salvation is in the New Testament. Somebody say, “How were they saved in the Old Testament?” Somebody replies and says, “By obeying the law.” No, no, no. There was nobody that could obey the law. They looked forward to the Redeemer having been revealed to Abraham. This was passed on and passed on, and they looked forward to the Redeemer who was going to come. And that faith in Him that would come one day was that which saved them. We look back to a Redeemer who has already come; they looked forward to a Redeemer who would come.

Well, Abraham’s promise that a seed would come, the Lord Jesus would come one day, was passed on to his son Isaac. Isaac was the son by faith. There was another son named Ishmael, but that was strictly of the flesh. That was Abraham trying to accomplish what only God could do. And then the promise was passed from Isaac to the younger of two sons. It was given to Jacob, the younger one. And God said, “Esau, you are going to serve the younger.” Jacob, however, was a sinner like you and I. Abraham was a sinner. Don’t look at these people as saints in that sense of the word, as perfect people. He was a deceiver. And God had to break Jacob. He had to get him alone. And the circumstances are beautiful in Scripture how He does it. And when he is by himself he wrestles with Him and finely had to break his will and broke his body. He touched him and put a limp in his leg, in his walk. And here was Jacob, limping along, and He changed his name. In that broken experience He changed his name to Israel.

And Israel now had 12 sons, each one of them had sons upon sons, upon sons, upon sons, upon sons. And so the nation began to grow and grow and grow, and they were the 12 tribes of Israel. So all true Jewish people can trace their lineage somehow through one of those 12 tribes all the way back to Abraham. And that is what He means, by our forefather Abraham. He says, “What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, has found?” Now this is interesting. That little word, “found” is *heurisko*. We get the word “eureka”; I found it, I discovered it, and that is the word.

What has Abraham, our physical cousin or whatever he is, our physical relative, what has he discovered? Now, in the original you have to tie “according to the flesh” with what he’s discovered. In other words, let me put it this way: what has Abraham, our physical relative, what has he discovered according to his own fleshly abilities in his own fleshly obedience? What has he discovered? And then in Ro 4:2 he picks it up. He says, “For if Abraham was justified by works.” Now that word “justified” means saved. “If he was saved by works, he has something to boast about.” In fact, if he found out that he could obey God and God would say, “That’s good, you’re righteous because of what you did,” then he has something to boast about. And we would have the whole Old Testament filled with what Abraham has done for God. But look how he concludes in Ro 4:2. He says, “But” that’s a contrasting word there, “not before God.” You see, there’s no way that any work that Abraham ever did had anything to do with his salvation, his justification.

In Romans 4:3 he says, “For what does the Scriptures say?” I love the way Paul does that. “And Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Abraham had no works to fall back on. You see, he simply believed what God said and he bowed down to that belief. You see, belief has got to affect your behavior or it’s not belief. He believed God. He didn’t say “God, look! I have defeated all these kings;” as a matter of fact when you find him in chapter 15 he has just done that. “And, God, I have done this and I have done that. I followed You when You told me in Genesis 12. Is that why I am being made righteous?” No, no, no; he had no work whatsoever. In fact, there was no law at that time he could obey in order to attain. Abraham was a sinner like everybody else.

Now, you say this to a Jewish person, they would become livid at that moment. But remember, Paul was a converted Jew, and so he understood where they were. Isaiah 43:27 was their own scripture, their own prophet, and he says your first forefather, which was Abraham, sinned—oh, if they could just understand that—and your spokesmen have transgressed against Me. Abraham had to be redeemed just like we have to be redeemed. Isaiah 29:22 says “Therefore thus says the Lord, who redeemed Abraham.” And so Galatians 3:6 is simply a quote and a reminder of Genesis 15:6, as he does also in Romans 4.

So Paul says, “What does the Scripture say? ‘And Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.’” That word “reckoned” should light your fire today. It’s the word *logizomai*. That’s a good word. *Logizomai* it is an accounting term: somebody has put something into my account that I didn’t earn, that I didn’t know about. I will tell you what, if I get a statement from the bank this week and it says I have \$20,000 more than what I thought I had in there, wouldn’t that be nice. Whose account of my account do

you think I am going to believe? Somebody has gotten into my account, put in there that which I did not earn, that which I do not deserve, but is now written to my account. That's the word "reckoned."

When I went to college I was standing in line, about 15 people back, and I knew when I got to that window I had to have some money to get in school. I wanted to go to school. God had put on my heart to go there. I might have had \$10, but I am going to need around \$800 when I get up there, and I don't know what I am going to do. And then I'm there. The lady looked at me and she said, "Yes, can I help you?" And I said, "My name is Wayne Barber," and I was about to tell her I didn't have any money, but I believe God told me to come here, which have really impressed her. And she said, "Wayne Barber, Wayne Barber, Wayne Barber. That rings a bell." And she opened up a file folder and she said, "Oh, here it is. Okay, how much of this money would you like to apply today to your account?" And I stood there bug-eyed. What money? I didn't want to say what money, because then maybe she had another Wayne Barber and just messed it up. And I said, "Well, exactly how much do I owe today?" And she said "\$800." I said, "That will be fine. Just put that on there today. I'll get the rest later on." Come to find out a missions group in North Carolina had been praying for me and God put on their heart to send some money for me. I didn't know anything about it. I didn't earn it. I certainly didn't deserve it, but God had put it to my account.

When Abraham believed what God had told him, it was reckoned to his account: righteous, righteous. Boy, if Abraham could have gotten into heaven and seen that word righteous written beside his name, you think there wouldn't be some shouting going on? That's what reckoned is all about. He didn't earn it; he didn't deserve it; but because he believed it, was reckoned to his account. It's not when we go to church 17 times out of 17 weeks. It's not when we tithe 24 out of 24 opportunities. It's not when we give money to the church. It's not all of the stuff. That kind of stuff can make us live morally; it can make us live ethically; it's good in a sense, but it has nothing to do with the good news that Jesus Christ has paid it all in full. And when we believe in Him He then comes into our heart, and written beside our name is the word "righteous".

Now watch what Paul goes on to do in Romans 4:9. I want you to read it, because if I say it that's one thing, but if you see it that's another. "Faith was reckoned to Abraham as righteousness. How then was it reckoned [Now watch carefully what he does], while he was circumcised or uncircumcised?" You see, circumcision was the initiation to the law. It was the first thing you had to do as a male. But circumcision hadn't even come about. It didn't come about until the 17th chapter of Genesis. This is the 15th chapter of Genesis. It wasn't because he was circumcised. No, that wasn't it. And then he goes on and he answers his own question, "Not while circumcised, but while uncircumcised. And he received the sign of the circumcision [It was only a sign; it was nothing else], a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had while uncircumcised, that he might be the father of all who believe without being circumcised; that righteousness might be reckoned to them."

And then it goes on: "And the father of circumcision to those who are not only of the circumcision, but who also follow in the steps of the faith of our father Abraham, which he had while uncircumcised." In other words, he can be the father of faith to the Jew and father of faith to the Gentile. There was no law even in the picture when he believed what God said and it was put to his account that he was now righteous.

So now why does Paul bring up all these Old Testament things about this man? Abraham is his first witness. He's his first witness to prove his point. You take any person that's in a religion and take them back to Abraham. How was he saved? Show me the works that he did. How many times did he do this or that? No, he believed and that's why the people who also believe become his children in a figurative sense. Because when we believe it's reckoned to our account as being righteous. So where Galatians 3:6 says "Even so Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness," he is an unquestionable example. There's no way in the world you can get around it. There was no law he could obey. There was nothing. He just believed and that was the key and the basis of his salvation, an unquestionable example.

But the second thing, we see an unchangeable truth. It's all through Scripture, folks, Old Testament. Listen, Paul and the ones who wrote the New Testament only had the Old Testament to go by, and every bit of it is right there. You study the book of Romans; there is almost more Old Testament passages than there are New Testament passages that are being written. Galatians 3:7. Now watch this; this is an unchangeable truth: "Therefore be sure [be certain] that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." Okay now, here, you are with me. Turn back to Romans 4 and look at the last part of Ro 4:16. He says, "For this reason it is by faith that it might be in accordance with grace [[[salvation]]] in order that the promise may be certain to all the descendants, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of faith of Abraham," Gentile or Jew. And then he says, "who is the father of us all," Gentile and Jew. How can he be our father? We are not physically related to him. No, we are spiritually related to him. Because he, by faith, believed God and we, by faith, believe God, then we are children of Abraham.

Now the reason Paul brings up "sons of Abraham" is because the Jewish people felt like they had a lock on that phrase. That's their phrase. I mean, you mention it and they think that's their phrase. They can trace their physical lineage all the way back to Abraham as we have already shown. So the term "sons of Abraham," like when Paul uses it in Galatians 3:7, was a specific term and it was already becoming an irritant to the Judaizers and to others who thought that was their term. But he's using it in a different way. Being

physically related to Abraham doesn't qualify one to be a son of Abraham in the way that Paul uses the term.

Now I want to show you this. I'm going to get away from Paul just for a second. I want to show you and it's going to take me a while to do it. It's a narrative, so stay with me. I want to take you back to the gospel of John, and I want you to see how Jesus uses that same basic understanding. You see, it's not something new to Paul. Jesus had already established this direction. If you will turn with me to John 8:12, we're going to read a bunch of verses. Stay with me. I'm not going to stop and comment. I want you to follow the flow all the way through.

John 8:12, "Then Jesus again spoke to them saying, 'I am the light of the world: he who follows Me will not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life.' So the Pharisees said to Him, 'You are testifying about Yourself. Your testimony is not true.' And Jesus answered and said to them, 'Even if I testify about Myself, My testimony is true: for I know where I came from and where I am going. But you do not know where I come from or where I am going. You judge according to the flesh. I am not judging anyone. But even if I do judge, My judgment is true: for I am not alone in it, but I and the Father who sent Me. Even in your law it has been written that the testimony of two men is true. I am He who testifies about Myself, and the Father who sent Me testifies about Me.' So they were saying to Him, 'Where is Your Father?' Jesus answered, "You know neither Me, nor My Father. If you knew Me you would know My Father also.' These words He spoke in the treasury as He taught in the temple, and no one seized Him because His hour had not yet come. Then He said again to them, 'I go away, and you will seek Me and will die in your sin: where I am going you cannot come.' So the Jews were saying, 'Surely He will not kill Himself will He, since He says, 'Where I am going you cannot come.' And He was saying to them, 'You are from below; I am from above; you are of this world; I am not of this world. Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; [listen to this] for unless you believe that I am He you will die in your sin.' So they were saying to Him, 'Who are You?' And Jesus said to them, 'What have I been saying to you from the beginning? I have many things to speak and to judge concerning you, but He who sent Me is true and the things which I heard from Him, these I speak to the world.' They did not realize that He had been speaking to them about the Father. So Jesus said, 'When you lift up the Son of man, then you will know that I am He, and I do nothing on My own initiative, but I speak these things as the Father taught Me. And He who sent Me is with Me. He has not left Me alone; for I always do the things that are pleasing to Him.' As He spoke these things many came to believe in Him."

And Jn 8:31 says, "So Jesus was saying to those Jews who had believed Him, 'If you continue in My word then you are truly disciples of Mine and you will know the truth and the truth will make you free.' They answered Him [Now watch this carefully], 'We are Abraham's descendents and have never yet been enslaved to anyone. How is it that You say, 'You will become free?'"

See that mindset? "We have never been slaves." Well, excuse me; let's go back to the Babylonians. Let's go back to the Assyrians. "Jesus answered them, 'Truly, truly I say to you, everyone who commits sin is a slave of sin. The slave does not remain in the house forever; the Son does remain forever. So if the Son makes you free you will be free indeed. I know that you are Abraham's descendents, yet you seek to kill Me because My word has no place in you. I speak the things which I have seen with My Father; therefore you also do the things which you heard from your father.' They answered and said to Him, 'Abraham is our father.' [They are adamant.] And Jesus said to them, 'If you are Abraham's children do the deeds of Abraham.' [In other words, trust Me.] 'But as it is you are seeking to kill Me, a man who has told you the truth which I heard from God. This Abraham did not do. You are doing the deeds of your father.' They said to Him [now they get off of Abraham], 'We were not born of fornication. We have one father, God.' [That sounds more spiritual.] And Jesus said to them, 'If God were your Father you would love Me, for I proceeded forth and have come from God. For I have not even come on My own initiative, but He sent Me. Why do you not understand what I am saying? It is because you cannot hear My words.'" Jn 8:44: "'You are of your father, the [who? the who?] the devil,'" and Jesus establishes that in the gospel of John.

Just because you are physically related to Abraham means nothing. Only when you, by faith, believe in the Lord Jesus Christ do you become figuratively and spiritually a child or a son of Abraham. To be a son of Abraham, as Paul and Jesus use the phrase, is to put your total trust into Christ for your salvation and for your Christian walk. The thing that's more impressive to me in this passage is that Paul is the one in Galatians making this statement. Do you realize it hadn't been that many years that if somebody had made that statement he would have taken them out back and no telling what he would have done to them. But now he has been converted. Now he understands the difference of the physical, the outside, and the spiritual on the inside, and now he sees it and he uses the phrase, "sons of Abraham" not in a physical relationship, but in a spiritual bond and a spiritual relationship.

Paul tells the Galatians in Galatians 3:7, "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." And that term, "of faith" is truly out of faith. Once more time he documents that it is only by faith that we are saved. Righteousness only comes on the basis of faith. No one act of human goodness qualifies us before or after salvation, and he's beginning to build his point.

So these first two points have to do with our salvation. But my next two points, which we will not get to today, have to do with our sanctification. Not only do I trust Him for my salvation, I trust Him every minute of every day. We sing the hymn, "I Need Thee Every Hour". No, I need You every breath. "God, if anything is going to happen this morning in this service, I can't do it. My ability falls

short, but God, will You take Your Word and do something eternal?” This is our prayer every day, every moment of our life, trusting Him and trusting His Word.

Can you imagine a Jewish person who grew up under the law? He never knew anything else. He never understood lostness because he is in, friend. He’s kin to Abraham. He never understood that. He understood gaining rewards in heaven and being the greatest and the least by what he obeyed. And then one day to find out he had been living needlessly. It was good what he did; it changed his behavior; it changed his moral ethics, etc.; but it did not change him on the inside. The good news is that now he has to bow and receive the Lord Jesus who brings the change from the inside out.

But, on the other hand, can you imagine the Gentile who has done well in this world? He has built his business. He has made millions, and he has tried to be good to the people and fair to his employees. He grew up helping people across the street if they couldn’t make it. He grew up helping people that were in need and he feels like all of this somehow qualifies him to be a believer. And yet, he finds out from Scripture that none of those works had one single thing to do with his salvation.

Well, the time is gone, but let me just read this one thing to you, okay. I knew you were ready for me to do that. Charles Plumb was a U.S. Navy jet pilot in Vietnam. After 75 combat missions his plane was destroyed by a surface-to-air missile. Plumb ejected and parachuted into enemy hands. He was captured and spent six years in a Communist Vietnamese prison. He survived the ordeal and now lectures on lessons learned from that experience. One day when Plumb and his wife were sitting in a restaurant a man at another table came up and said, “You’re Plumb. You flew jet fighters in Vietnam from the aircraft carrier Kitty Hawk. You were shot down.” This amazed him. He said, “How in the world did you know that?” Plumb asked. “I packed your parachute,” the man replied. Plumb gasped in surprise and gratitude. The man pumped his hand and said, “I guess it worked.” Plumb assured him, “It sure did. If your chute hadn’t worked I would not be here today.”

Plumb couldn’t sleep that night thinking about the man. Plumb says, “I kept thinking and wondering what he would look like in a Navy uniform, a white hat, a bib in the back, and bell-bottom trousers. I wondered how many times I might have seen him and not even said ‘good morning, how are you’ or anything, because you see, I was a fighter pilot and he was only a sailor.” Plumb thought of the many hours a sailor had spent at a long wooden table in the bowels of the ship carefully weaving the shrouds and folding the silks of each chute, holding in his hands each time, the fate of someone he did not know. Now Plumb asked his audience, “Who is packing your parachute?”

And I grabbed a hold of that story; you know how my mind works. I got to thinking about that. You know what? We’re just cruising along in this life, aren’t we? And I want to tell you, we don’t know the hour, we don’t know the day, but one of these days we are going to be ejected out of here either by death or the Lord Jesus Christ coming and my question to you this morning is “Who has packed your parachute?” If you think your good works are going to hold you up, friend, you’ve got an interesting thing to learn. It is going to hell, separated from God forever regardless of all the good works you have ever done or thought about doing. But if you have placed your faith in Jesus Christ, as Abraham did, and you are now a son of Abraham in that figurative sense—you are trusting only Christ—then, brother, He has packed your parachute and you are going to have a safe landing to be with Him forever and ever and evermore. Where are you today? You want to be religious? Boy, that’s fun isn’t it. That sure will change us on the outside. How can religious people be so mean? Because that good news of religion doesn’t compare to the good news of Jesus Christ.

Galatians 3:6-11 The Means of Our Sanctification

Now he’s headed on toward something else, but that’s where he is right now. Salvation is not by works. This is the gospel. This is the message that we have to take to work with us, to take to our neighborhoods, to take around the world.



Well, turn with me to Galatians 3. We’re going to pick up where we left off this past week. We’re going to be looking at Gal 3:8-11 today. What a powerful passage! Remember, I told you to strap your seatbelts on; it is going to start getting deeper and deeper now. If you will stay with me and just pray, maybe we could start seeing this come together. It’s beautiful if you can see it. It’s really profoundly simple. Sometimes the frailty of preaching makes a little more complex.

The last time we were together we saw how Paul develops his case to these Galatian believers that salvation is by faith alone in Christ alone. There’s no other means to be saved. Now he’s headed on toward something else, but that’s where he is right now. Salvation is not by works. This is the gospel. This is the message that we have to take to work with us, to take to our neighborhoods, to take around the world. You know, missions and evangelism are the same thing, across the street, around the world. And this is our message, that God so loved all of us that He gave His only begotten Son that whosoever—what? Believes; not

works for Him, not earns it by some work—believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.

Recently a mother told me this story. She has four boys and she said one of her boys said, “Momma, I want to be saved. I want to go to heaven. How can I be saved?” Isn’t it a precious time when your children come and ask those questions? Well, the older brother—and that’s the way it always is, isn’t it; they are going to intimidate everybody—the older brother says, “It’s by good works. It’s by good works. You’d better be good or you can’t go.” And the mother said, “Son, you know better than that. It’s by grace you are saved by faith. You just put your trust in Jesus Christ and what He did for you.” She said that little seven-year-old looked at his brother, “works,” and he looked at his momma, “grace” and he said, “Momma, I want to be saved that way.”

You know, the apostle Paul would have risen up and called him blessed. I guarantee you right there. That’s exactly what he’s saying to the Galatians. “You want works? No, I didn’t think so. I think you want the message of grace.” Well, to prove his case that salvation is only by faith alone in Christ alone, he brings his star witness to the forefront. And that star witness is a man by the name of Abraham. Isn’t that the genius of the Holy Spirit of God? I mean, Abraham was the hero of all of the Jews. I mean, to bring Abraham’s name up would have stopped everybody. And he shows them in Gal 3:6-7 that Abraham had to be saved by faith. Isn’t that amazing? Why is it that they haven’t thought about that? It wasn’t works that saved Abraham. He believed and it was accounted, or reckoned to him as righteousness. Look at Gal 3:6. It says, “Even so, Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness.” Abraham was an unquestionable witness. There’s nothing you can do with it. It’s right there in Genesis. How do you skip it? How do you get around it? If you don’t factor that into what salvation is all about and how a person can be saved, then you miss the point.

Last week we went over to Romans 4 and we saw in detail the justification by faith alone in Christ alone by Abraham. Do you realize when Abraham was saved when he believed that there was no covenant of law? There was no circumcision. Circumcision did not come about till Ge 17, many years later, of the book of Genesis. Abraham believed God. And the word for believed there is *pisteuo*. *Pisteuo* comes from the word *pistos*, which means to put your total trust into someone. In other words, you can’t trust good works, but you can trust what Jesus has done for us. Somebody gave an acrostic of the word “faith” once. It says “forsaking all, I trust Him.” And that’s what Abraham did. And it was reckoned. That word “reckoned” is an accounting word. It was written to his account. I gave the illustration last week: wouldn’t it be great to see your bank statement and have \$30,000 more than you thought you had? It was just reckoned to your account. You didn’t earn it. You didn’t do anything for it. It was written beside your name in your account.

Well, this fact, this unquestionable example that Abraham was, that faith alone in Christ alone is the only way of salvation, leads us to an unchangeable truth. It has been there all along. It was there in Genesis; it’s there in the New Testament. What is that?

Gal 3:7: “Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham.” Now, we saw how both Jesus and Paul used that phrase. You see, the Jewish mindset was “that is our term; that is our phrase, because we can track our physical lineage back to Abraham. We are his sons.”

But Paul and Jesus use it in a different way. Even Abraham and how he was saved qualifies the meaning of how they used it. It’s in a spiritual sense. Only people who have put their faith into Christ, have believed God, these are the ones who are children, figuratively, spiritually, of Abraham; those who put their faith in Christ. Now, let’s watch as how Paul continues to defend righteousness by faith as we move on. And I will tell you what, strap your seatbelts on because he’s going to deal with some interesting things here. You have to put yourself in the mindset of the Judaizers who are reading this letter. He’s going to infuriate them before it’s over with, and this is nothing compared to what’s coming in the book of Galatians.

So we have an unquestionable example, Abraham. I mean, to any person who ever doubts that salvation is by faith, take him back to Genesis and show him Abraham. That’s how he was saved, no works, none of this other stuff; it was strictly by faith. And then, secondly, an unchallenged truth. But then thirdly, as we pick up where we left off last week, we want to see an unrestricted covenant.

The covenant of grace that Paul is going to bring up here in a moment that was promised to Abraham was not restricted to Jews. In fact, when it was made there were no Jews. We do understand that today, don’t we? The Jewish race, Abraham had a son named Isaac. Isaac had two sons. The younger was named Jacob, and Jacob’s name was changed to Israel. Israel had 12 sons, and there is your nation of Israel. You didn’t even have that when the covenant was given to Abraham. But it wasn’t restricted to Jews. Now, think with me just for a second. He’s about to tell them that the Gentiles are included. He’s already angered the Judaizers with faith alone in Christ alone, not the Mosaic Law, not circumcision, etc. But now he’s going to take a step further.

If you really wanted to infuriate a legalizer, a false teacher who believes in works, especially Judaizers of that day, well, you could find no better way than what Paul used in Gal 3:8. He includes the Gentiles. Look what he says here before that. The Jews were separatists. You talk about ethnic cleansing; they were separatists. I mean, “We are the ones.” And if a Gentile was to be included in, their law allowed them to come in as a proselyte Jew. You know what that is? That’s a person who can be any age and he’s born a Gentile, raised a Gentile, but he chooses one day to affiliate with them. He wants to be a part of the Jewish people. Well, to get in you had to go through the rite of circumcision, the males, and then you had to get up under the law of Moses.

Now Paul dealt with this at the church in Philippi. There were no synagogues there when he went, so the Jewish flavor that was there was probably proselyte Jews and that's why he said, "You think you're a Jew; let me talk about my pedigree, buddy, if you want to compare apples and oranges." So to them, all Gentiles had to become Jews if they were going to be concluded at all. Their system allowed for this.

Now imagine their reaction when Paul says in Gal 3:8, "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All the nations shall be blessed in you.'" Now, what is he doing? He's going back to that covenant promise that began, really back in Genesis 12 and it was finalized in the 15th chapter, that God would justify, save—the word "justification/salvation" same—that He would justify the Gentiles by faith. Now, I will tell you what, that one phrase could cause those Judaizers to start breathing fire. I mean, he has really stirred the pot on this one. Paul says that the Scriptures foresaw that salvation would come to the Gentiles.

Now, I'll tell you what; I'm certainly glad this morning. Aren't you glad—we're Gentiles—that God's love and God's plan has always extended to both Jew and to Gentile? Now, we know that Moses wrote the first five books, and in the book of Genesis he makes it very clear, Genesis 12:3, that we are included: "And I will bless those who bless you and the one who curses you I will curse. And in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed." All the families of the earth shall be blessed.

But now listen to this: not only are they included in that original covenant way back in Genesis 12-15, it's not just that, but how they are included is the issue. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by [what?] faith." Oh no, oh no. It wasn't just that they would be included, but the same way Abraham was saved is the same way a Gentile is saved and the same way a Jew would be saved—by faith alone in Christ alone. Can't you just hear those Judaizers? Can't you hear them? "What do you mean? What do you mean? I mean, God, if You're going to include them at least put them up under the law. Don't let it be by faith. That is too easy. They grew up pagan. They didn't grow up under the covenants and the promises; they don't have all the background. Put them back up under the law."

That's not what the Scripture said. "They shall be justified by faith." "And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith." And that word, "foreseeing" is the word [*proeidon*](#). *Pro*, before; and *eido*, to clearly perceive something. It's the word that means to look way ahead, to see afar off. If you have ever studied the book of Daniel you know what we're talking about; how it looks through and sees Antiochus Epiphanes and then long beyond that it sees the very end of time that hadn't even taken place yet, to see way ahead to that which has not happened yet, to see far off.

My dad, in 1966 took me out in the front yard of our house. He had been having a lot of health problems. He was 60 years old. I was 23 at the time. And he sat me down in the yard there and he said, "Son, I will not be here by Thanksgiving." I had been off in college and I hadn't fully understood the depth of this of what was going on. He said, "Wayne, I have been having these pains." He said, "I just believe God has told me my time is up." He said, "Now," and he went through a list of things. "You take care of your mother, etc., etc." And I remember getting up, walking away from that conversation and thinking that's not going to happen. That's not going to happen. But on November 12, 1966, I was home from college that weekend, and my dad went on to be with the Lord Jesus by about 12:00 noon that day. Dad was able to see ahead. He was able to look afar off. Really it was not that far from that time, but he was able to see something that hadn't yet happened and he was able to tell it to me.

The Scriptures were looking way ahead to Christ. The Scriptures understood the fact that God would justify the Gentiles by faith. Look at it again. "And the Scriptures, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith [Look at this], preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham." Now that's interesting. The word for "preach" there is the Greek word [*proeuaggelizomai*](#) or [*proeuangelizomai*](#) (see B-2). Now note what it says. It says, "The Scripture preached to Abraham." I think that's interesting. When Scripture speaks, God speaks. When God speaks, the Scripture speaks. That's why we study the Word of God. It's the Word of God. When He speaks, that's the Scriptures.

Well, God spoke to him and revealed something. And Paul shows the gospel is older than the law. Do you realize that? It preached the gospel to Abraham in that day. Now, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute, wait a minute. This is before the law ever came about. This is before Israel had ever even become a nation. The gospel was preached to Abraham. The gospel, the good news, faith alone in Christ alone, is older than Israel. It's older than the law. It was preached to Abraham in Genesis 12-15.

Well, even though it was hundreds of years away, Abraham got a preview, didn't he? He got a preview of, something was going to happen, what was going to happen afar off, and that was going to be that Jesus Christ, the Redeemer would one day be born of a woman. And it would be through the tribes of Israel, of a nation that had not yet even come to be. "The Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, 'All the nations will be blessed in you.'" And that word for "nations" is the word *ethnos*. We get the word "ethnic" from it. It's the word used to denote all nations that were not Jewish. All the nations. It would include them in this passage, but it is used later on to be all the nations that were not Jewish. They too would be included into this promise.

Now, I want to make sure you understand what he's saying here. Abraham was promised a land; he was promised a nation; and he was promised a seed. And that seed would not be Isaac that was born of faith when Abraham was 100 years old and Sarah was 90. No, that just opened the door in order for Jacob to come about. And Jacob was named, changed name to Israel, and then the nation could come about. Then the land, the nation, but the seed would pass through one of those tribes. It would be through the tribe of Judah; and the line of David; that through Christ and faith alone in Him alone all nations would be blessed.

So Paul's argument continues. He has made two very important points. Abraham was saved by faith before there was a law, before there was Israel. Abraham was saved by faith. The gospel is older than Israel. But not only that, Jew and Gentile are included in the covenant that was made to him. From the very beginning God looked out and saw the Jew and the Gentile and He included all of us in His covenant. Paul's point has been the gospel, again, is older than the law. Abraham was saved by faith. The Gentiles are included and what he's really saying here, I think—and it really makes an exclamation point—is if this is true; and it is, in Scripture—how are you going to argue with Scripture—and if all that's true, then listen to this; why would the Judaizers impose a law that was only temporary at best, and came 400 years after Abraham was made this promise, why would they impose the law on anybody, especially the Gentiles?

Do you realize the very moment we started imposing law on people we have gone against the gospel which goes all the way back to Genesis? It's amazing how erroneous we can become by thinking there has got to be works involved in any way. That has never been the way it has been. All the way back to the book of Genesis, they were saved in the Old Testament just like we are saved in the new covenant. They looked forward to the Redeemer which was preached to Abraham and certainly passed on from generation to generation that message. But we look back to the Redeemer who has already come.

So, an unquestionable example, Abraham. How do you get around him? But not only that, an unchangeable truth. The sons of Abraham, as Jesus used it and Paul used it and as seen Genesis, are those who put their faith into the Lord Jesus. And then an unrestricted covenant. It's not just for the Jew, it is also for the Gentile. But then finally we have an understood principle. Now, there's a transition that's going to start taking place in Gal 3:9. He's addressing believers, so he has, first of all, addressed this salvation, how they got saved. Now he's about to change it and start addressing how they live once they are saved.

Faith alone in Christ alone for salvation; well, what do I do now? Faith alone in Christ alone. It's the same. It's the same way all the way through. By faith alone in Christ alone. Gal 3:9, he says, "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham the believer." Now, I want you to notice here, he didn't say "those who are of works". He said those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.

Now, that little phrase "Abraham the believer" is interesting, because if you've got other translations it will bring some things out that are necessary. The word "believer" there is *pistos*. Now *pistos* is the word that means faithful, and it denotes a lifestyle. What he's saying here is that Abraham, yes, he was saved by faith alone in Christ alone, that gospel that was revealed to him in Genesis. But once that he was declared righteous, he lived by faith alone in what God said, in who God was. This was the character of Abraham once he became righteous.

You see, that's the issue with Galatia, because they had, as believers, jumped back under law. And he said, "Wait a minute, let us go back to Abraham again. Not only was he saved by faith, but once he was saved he lived by faith." The faith lifestyle of Abraham, the surrendered heart of Abraham, is clearly seen in Genesis 22. I'm not going to take you back there; I don't have the time. But in Genesis 22 God spoke to him and He said, "I want you to take Isaac." Isaac was the apple of his eye. Isaac is the son of faith. He said, "I want you to take him up on Mount Mariah and I want you to put him to death." Now, if you will go back sometime and read Genesis 22, Abraham never flinched. He trusted the character of God so much his faith was not in the word; his faith was in the God of the word, and that's why when the word came he had no problems whatsoever, and he immediately moved to do what God said.

Oh, the beautiful story that unfolds there. He takes his son and a little party of people with him. They get to the foot of Mount Mariah; He says, "You guys wait here for us. My son and I are going up to worship God and we will return." God has already told him to take his life, to sacrifice him. It says in the book of Hebrews he believed that if God made him go through with it that God would raise him from the dead. That's how much he believed God. And here they were walking up that mountain. Nobody really knows how old Isaac was at that time, but he was certainly old enough to carry the wood of the altar.

And he is walking up, he's carrying the wood. The dad has got the fire. He looks over at his dad and he says "Daddy, here's the wood and here's the fire, but where's the sacrifice?" And his dad, well, can you believe this? I mean, here's his son, he said, "God will provide the sacrifice." And as they are walking up, here is a man that has learned how to trust God. I mean, this is the most precious thing in his life that God has asked him to lay down, and he says "I so trust You, God, that if you tell me to do it, I am going to do it, no questions asked."

That's what faith living is, folks. You just do what God says and you trust Him. And as he's walking up one side of the mountain, the sacrifice is walking up the other, that old ram. And they got up on the top. He built the altar, laid his son down on it, took the knife,

was ready to kill him. Why? Because God told him to do it. And as he brought his knife down, the angel in heaven, the angel of the Lord, the Lord Jesus Christ—it's an occurrence of Jesus in the Old Testament—and He shouted from heaven and He says, "Stop! Stop!" And boy, Abraham, that was the greatest thing he had ever heard in all of his life. And there he looked and there was a ram caught by his horns in the thicket. I will tell you what; I'm a hunter, and a lot of you guys out there are hunters. But I tell you what, what are the odds, what are the odds of any ram getting caught in a thicket by his horns? That's where he lives. But on that day God said to the thicket, "Grab that ram." And it grabbed it, and there was the sacrifice.

Now, listen. You say, "Why is that so important?" Well, ask the Scriptures. James 2:21 says, "Was not Abraham justified by his works?" And you say, "Wait a minute. That contradicts; he did works." No, the word "justified" is *dikaioo*, which means, no sir, he was not justified, he was proven to be justified. Why? Because not only was he saved by faith, he lived by faith. And that act in Genesis 22 proved him throughout all of Scripture. Hebrews 11 brings it up again.

So you see what Paul is trying to get to the Galatian mindset: you were saved by faith. We have documented that. It has always been by faith alone in Christ alone; with Abraham before Israel ever existed. The gospel is older than even Israel and the law. And then he shifts gears just now. If you're saved by faith, then what's wrong with you people? Do you think, as he says it earlier in chapter 3, do you think now you can be perfected by fleshly works? You see, the law is ineffective to produce salvation. Anything wrong with the law? No, and we are going to see that coming up in Gal 3. The law is fine. It just can't produce what it demands. Not only can't it produce salvation, it can't produce holy living, folks. On the external, yes, it can curb your behavior, give you morals and ethics, but it can't change your life. It can't change you from the inside out.

Gal 3:10 says, "For as many as are of the works of the law," listen to this, "are under a curse." You want to go back under the law? Is that what you want? I keep thinking of that little boy. "I want your way, momma. I don't want that way." Is that what you want? Then you're under a curse. "For it is written, 'Cursed is every one who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them.'"

Now, what Paul does here, he jumps back to Deuteronomy. Don't you love how he uses the Old Testament? In fact, remember, he was writing the New Testament as he was going along, so these are all Old Testament scriptures. And he goes back to Deuteronomy 27:26, and here is what it says there: "Cursed is he who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them." And the implicit thought is, all of the law. I don't know why people can't realize, and especially the Jews, that no Jew ever fulfilled the total law of the Ten Commandments. Nobody could do that except for one who was born of a virgin, the seed promised to Abraham. And why did He come? He came to do what all men had been proven they could not do. He didn't come to destroy the law, he came to fulfill the law. And so therefore He is the only one. One man, born to a virgin, the God-man, the Lord Jesus Christ.

Those who choose law and those who have chosen law unwittingly put themselves under God's wrath. Now, why would you want to go back and get under law? Again, it's good, but it cannot produce what it demands. Romans 10:1-10 tells us that Israel never made it. And why they can't see this I don't know. God is going to have to do this revealing. But here's what Paul says, speaking of his own brethren. He says, "Brethren, my heart's desire and my prayer to God for them is for their salvation." He even says in another passage "I would have given up my own salvation just to see my brethren come to know Christ." Ro 10:2: "For I testify about them that they have a zeal for God," don't doubt that, "but not in accordance with knowledge." They don't understand. "For not knowing about God's righteousness and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God," which can only be produced by faith. "For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one who believes. For Moses writes that the man who practices the righteousness which is based on law shall live by that righteousness." In other words, all of it. "But the righteousness based on faith speaks as follows." I love this. "Do not say in your heart, 'who will ascend into heaven as if to bring Christ down', or 'who will descend into the abyss,' that is, to bring Christ up from the dead." No man can accomplish that. But what does it say? "The word is near you in your mouth and in your heart, that is the word of faith which we are preaching." And Paul, can't you see the frustration sometimes when he is preaching. He says it is right there in front of you. Why can't you understand it? "That if you confess with your mouth Jesus as Lord and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart a person believes resulting in righteousness and with the mouth he confesses resulting in salvation."

The law never saved anyone, especially Israel. They were never able to accomplish that moral law that God has set as His standard. Then in Galatians 3:11 Paul jumps from his point—no man can obey all of the law—and then he jumps to Habakkuk 2:4. And what he's going to show here is not only does faith save you, it's faith that sanctifies you. The same Christ, trusting in Him, trusting His word, yielding to Him, is what saves you, and it's the same that sustains you once you are saved.

Gal 3:11: "That no one is justified by the law before God is evident, for the righteous man shall live by faith." Now the word "evident" is the word *delos*. It's a word that means totally crystal clear. Paul says it's clear; it's evident. Who would come against Scripture? Who would come against the covenant to Abraham? "It is clear that no one is justified by the law before God." But then he goes on to show you why. Because if that could have justified you, then that's the way you live after you get justified or saved. And then he says, "For the righteous man shall live by faith." That is a quote right out of Habakkuk, their own Scripture, Habakkuk 2:4. "The

righteous man.”

Gal 3:10, which is a quote out of Deuteronomy, proves the fact that justification, salvation, is not by law, not by law. Nobody has been able to obey the law. But then he jumps to Habakkuk and proves that salvation not only is by faith, holy living—the way we live after we get saved—is by faith. He says, “The righteous man, the man who has been made righteous, has been saved, should walk by faith.”

Leviticus 18:5. Then he jumps to this passage. He quotes another Old Testament passage. And then he’s sort of locking his whole argument up. He says in verse 12, “However, the law is not of faith. On the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them.” You want law? There’s no faith involved, you just go out and do it. The only problem is, you can’t. Now, is that what you want, Galatians? No, I don’t think so. That was a temporary covenant. That’s all it was, to get us ready for the message of grace. Leviticus 18:5 says “So you shall keep My judgments and My statutes by which a man may live if he does them. I am the Lord.” The law says “do and live”: he who practices and he who does them. But grace says, listen to this, “become and live”. Now, which one do we want? Which one do we want? It’s not a matter of doing, it’s a matter of becoming. It’s letting Jesus be Jesus in our life. Once we get, that’s the way we got saved; that’s the way we live after salvation.

Well, Paul’s argument is, it’s impossible to attain righteousness before salvation and after salvation, unless it is by faith, trusting, “forsaking all I trust Him and His Word.” That’s the only way righteousness can even ever come about. They would agree with Gal 3:11. That’s the way it is in our day. I would rather be saved by faith. Everybody, it seems like, in the 21st century understands saving grace. But where they have their problem is in living grace, which takes on the other side of the cross. That’s where the struggles become.

Well, back in chapter 3, earlier he says in Gal 3:2, “This is the only thing I want to find out from you.” And I love these questions. “Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?” He didn’t say “do you”. He said “did you”. He’s pointing back to their salvation. They’re already saved. He’s making his point. And then he asks a great question in Gal 3:5. And it dawned on me when I was studying this, I really haven’t covered Gal 3:5. Let me hit it quickly. He says in Gal 3:5, “So then does He who provides you with the Spirit,” listen to this, “and works miracles among you,” except it’s not “among”, it is the word “in,” in you, “do it by the works of the law?”

In other words, “Well, God, I have a quiet time every day at 4:00 in the morning; and I’ve got to pass out all those tracts; and I haven’t missed church in six years; and oh, God, thank You so much that because I have been good then You have done these things in my life.” Is that the way God does it? Is that the way He does miracles within you? And then he says, “Or is it by hearing with faith?” Hearing and understanding is saying, “God, You said it, I’m going to stand on it,” and then God begins to do the miraculous in us and through us.

The Galatian churches had made a huge mistake. Lord, my prayer is we don’t make it here. They had gone back to human good. You know why? Because it’s logical, isn’t it? I mean, let’s get together and get a committee together. We’ve got to help God out. I mean, He’s an old man sitting on the back porch. He doesn’t know what’s going on. We’ve got to do something, do something quickly. No, sir! No, sir! We get on our face before God and we find out what God is doing and we say, “Yes, Lord,” and we begin to cooperate with Him. And then what He does, everybody stands back in awe and says, “Oh, that’s God.” That’s what Christianity is all about.

The Galatians bought what the 21st century has bought. They bought back into religion, a system, a performance. Colossians 2:6 says, “Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk you in Him.” Nothing has changed. I’m just as desperate today in this message, my hands are sweating right now for God to speak to your hearts, as I would have been the day that I got saved. And if we don’t understand that, then we’ve been duped. Oh, foolish believers in the 21st century, who has bewitched you? Did you get saved this way? You certainly can’t live this way. It’s by faith alone in Christ alone.

Galatians 3:12-18 Free to Be What God Wants Me to Be

You see, most people even today, would agree that, yes, faith alone in Christ alone is the means of salvation, but that’s where they run into a brick wall. Now what? How do we live now? And that’s Paul’s argument as he begins the third chapter of Galatians.



Turn in your Bibles if you will to Galatians 3. We’re going to be looking at Gal 3:12 and following today. Now, let me go back and catch you up as to where we are. Paul’s argument in the third chapter of Galatians has been awesome. He has been combating the

false teachers. The false teachers have come in and deceived the Galatian people and gotten them back up under law, and Paul is trying to combat that error and trying to come against that heresy.

He begins by asking several very pointed questions to which the answer is as clear as a bell, and that's in Gal 3:1-5. I mean, he said, "did you get saved by your works," etc. I mean, we've been through that. And then in Gal 3:6 he does something that's incredible. He brings up an unquestionable example that nobody can come against. He brings up the man by the name of Abraham. Everything he says from this point forward hinges on who Abraham is, who Abraham was, and what happened in his life.

First of all, Abraham was saved by faith. Now, he wants to make sure they understand this. Abraham came a long time ago, back in the book of Genesis. Technically he was saved by faith alone in Christ alone. He says in Gal 3:6, "Even so Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Now, the word "reckoned" again, and we have been over it and over it, it simply means written to his account. There's no way you and I can earn salvation. And even back to Abraham he couldn't either. It was reckoned to him. He didn't earn it. He didn't deserve it. But because he believed, it was written, or reckoned, to his account. That's the first thing Paul wants to make sure they understand.

Secondly, since Abraham was saved by faith that leads us to an unchangeable truth. It has never changed. He set the pattern for salvation. He set the pattern for sanctification way back in the book of Genesis.

Gal 3:7 says, "Therefore be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." Now, that term "of faith" is really "out of faith". It's the word *ek*. *Ek* means out of; it gives origin to something. Those who are products of faith are those who are sons of Abraham. We saw how Jesus and Paul use that very phrase, "sons of Abraham" to describe those who put their faith and their trust into God and to His Word. Abraham was saved by faith. Everybody then who is also saved by faith are sons of Abraham. We can all stand up today and say we are sons of Abraham, figuratively and spiritually. Why? Because we are saved the same way he was saved.

Thirdly, Paul brings out the fact that the gospel of Jesus Christ was preached to Abraham. I don't know if that has grabbed you yet. Has that grabbed you yet? The gospel, the same gospel we believe, was preached to Abraham. This is before the law ever came into existence. You will see today, 430 years ([note](#)) before there ever was any such thing as the law, and many, many years before Israel ever became a nation, Abraham was not a Jew. Abraham was a Chaldean and God brought him forth and said it's going to be from you I'm going to create a nation. The gospel of Jesus Christ. He understood that one day, through the nation that God planned to give to him, would come the seed. And that seed would be the Lord Jesus Christ, the Redeemer of the world. What a powerful point Paul brings up. How are you going to argue with that? Why would you go 430 years later and try to put people up under a temporary covenant when all the way back here God has already given you the pattern in how Abraham was saved?

And then the fourth thing Paul brings up is, this gospel which was preached to Abraham included the Gentiles and the Jews. Galatians 3:8 ([note](#)), "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, 'All the nations.'" Now, make sure you're hearing what I'm saying. Israel was not a nation when this was given. Israel was one of those nations. "All of the nations will be blessed in you." Now think about what Abraham has brought up on the table. Think about why Paul is using Abraham as such an example. Before Israel ever existed, before there ever was a law, it was revealed to Abraham that there was going to be a Redeemer that was going to come one day. For the Redeemer to get His humanity He would be born of a virgin. He would come through one of the tribes of Israel. Abraham had a son, Isaac. Isaac had two sons, one was Jacob. Jacob was the one that the covenant was passed to. Jacob became Israel. Israel had 12 sons, and one of those sons was named Judah. And it was through the tribe of Judah and the line of David that that seed would come. This was preached to Abraham before Israel ever existed. Faith alone in Christ alone was the means of salvation from the get go. And what Paul is trying to say is, what in the world are you people doing?

And then finally the fifth thing Paul shows is that the law doesn't save us and it doesn't sanctify us. Faith is not only how Abraham was saved, it's how he lived after he was saved. It framed his lifestyle. And he says in Gal 3:9, "So then those who are of faith [out of faith, products of faith] are blessed with Abraham the believer." The words "Abraham the believer," the word "believer" there in Gal 3:9 means the faithful one, the faithful Abraham, Abraham the faithful. The word *pistos* describes a lifestyle. And we saw the last time we were here, to prove that he lived by faith once he was saved, it was accounted to him as righteousness. Genesis 22 was put into Scripture, and that's when he was told to take Isaac up on the mountain. That's documented in Hebrews 11; that's documented in James 2:21, 23-note. And it was proof of the fact that he had truly been justified by faith.

You see, most people even today, would agree that, yes, faith alone in Christ alone is the means of [[salvation]], but that's where they run into a brick wall. Now what? How do we live now? And that's Paul's argument as he begins the third chapter of Galatians. And really he has already settled it. He said, "If you started that way, why are you trying to be perfected by the works of the flesh?" And then he quotes out of Habakkuk 2:4 ([note](#)) just to remind them that faith is the only way a person lives. He says, "Now that no one is justified by the law before God is evident. For the righteous man [that's the Christian, that's the believer] shall live by faith." That's how you live after you get saved. That's how you get saved.

And so this is his whole argument. Abraham, oh, how much hinges on how Abraham was saved and how he lived. So Abraham was saved by faith. All those Jew and Gentiles who are saved by faith are sons of Abraham. The gospel was preached to Abraham before the law and the nation of Israel ever existed. The gospel, in the gospel, the Gentiles and the Jew were included.

And fifthly, the law does not save, nor does it sanctify. Then to strengthen his argument he says in Gal 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse: for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law to perform them.'" Now again, he uses that little term "of," which is really "out of". Those who are products of the law are under a curse. What Paul is trying to say is if the law produced what you are now then you had better hope it can produce what you should continue to be. But it can't and that's his whole point.

Many people think that by Paul saying these things about the law that he is anti-Semitic. And I want to make sure we nail this down. No, sir! Paul was in no way anti-Semitic; he was anti-law. Do you see the difference? Now, as a matter of fact, Paul was a Jew and he was converted. His Jewish brethren, he loved them more than anybody I know of in the whole New Testament. He says in Romans 9:3 (note), "For I could wish that I myself were accursed, separated from Christ, for the sake of my brethren." It breaks his heart. He says, "My kinsmen according to the flesh." They are putting all their stock into a temporary covenant and they are not looking beyond it to the everlasting covenant that was given to Abraham. Well, Paul himself—a former Pharisee; talking about a Jewish man, I mean, that was the most religious sect that you could have—was a man who said "I had to be set free from the curse of the law, my brethren need to be set free, and the only way is through Jesus Christ."

In Gal 3:12 he says, "However, the law is not of faith." That's very important. "On the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them." There's no faith existent with the law mentality; all it is is a "do" mentality—you do it and you live; you don't you die. And that's the law mentality. And he says there's no faith built into it.

This brings us up to where we are today. You say, "Why do you do so much review?" Well, it's important and it's very helpful. You've got to stay in the flow because he is not finished yet. I told you to strap your seatbelts on. This stuff is getting deeper and deeper, but I will tell you, if God will just open our eyes it's the simplest truth in the world and it will just absolutely, you will wake up in the middle of the night shouting when you begin to see it, the covenant of grace that we are under.

He turns our focus now from Abraham and he shifts it over to Christ and what Christ has done in fulfillment of the promise that was given to Abraham. Three things I want you to see. First of all is the freedom that we have in Christ. Gal 3:13: "Christ 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.'" Now, folks, listen. No man can obey the moral law of God, no human being of flesh and blood, born of man and woman, no man can do it. Jesus was the only one that can do that. And for the sake of you that have not been with us, or perhaps you have been and you are still confused, let me try to go back over this one more time.

When I say the moral law of God, I refer to the Ten Commandments. The law was divided into two parts basically. The first part was the ceremonial law. Now, this was the part that contained all the rituals, the feasts, the sabbath days. It was basically their religious order. It was what they were required to do in order to worship God. The ceremonial law was just a shadow of Christ in the Old Testament. That's all it was. I don't know about you, but when you walk around the corner and your shadow precedes you, that's not real. That's just pointing to something. The form is coming after the shadow. It's the fulfillment of what has already been previewed.

Well, Hebrews beautifully brings this out. All that they did in their ritualistic ceremonial laws were pointing to the Lord Jesus Christ. In Hebrews 10:1 (note) it says, "For the law, since it has only a shadow of the good things to come and not the very form of things, can never by the same sacrifices which they offer continually year by year make perfect those who draw near." You see, this ceremonial law, this religious instruction of what one was supposed to do, including circumcision, was attainable. Anybody could do it. In no way would the ceremonial law ever condemn anybody. In fact, Paul himself boasted of having attained the ceremonial law. Philippians 3:5 (note), "Circumcised the eighth day of the nation of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of Hebrews, as to the law, a Pharisee, as to zeal, a persecutor of the church, as to the righteousness which is in the law, found blameless." That couldn't condemn anybody. There were many that lived up to the ceremonial law.

However, the moral law, the Ten Commandments, no one could attain. Therefore all men are under its curse. Do we understand that this morning? It's the Ten Commandments that condemn all men, Jew and Gentile. It's the standard of conduct that God requires from all of us. It has never been erased, it has been fulfilled. The Lord Jesus, who gave that law, is the One who came as a man to fulfill it. He said, "I did not come to destroy the law; I came to fulfill it."

Now, because of this law which condemns us all, we are all on spiritual death row. If you are here this morning and you have never bowed before the Lord Jesus Christ, you are sitting on spiritual death row. You have no hope. There's not one way in the world you can save yourself from the penalty of hell, being separated from God forever, unless somebody comes to redeem us. And I will tell you what, I want to sober us a little bit to think about those people that we go to work with, that we live with, that are in our neighborhood, that don't know Christ, are sitting on spiritual death row. I don't know if you ever read the book *The Chamber*, by I

think his name is Grisham. He came out of Mississippi. I love that particular statement he made. He said, "I don't write bad books because my mother reads them." And *The Chamber* was talking about a man who was on death row in Mississippi, at Parchment State Penitentiary. I've been there.

No, not what you think. I was in the principal's office all my life, but I haven't been to prison. No, I had some kids in my youth group when I was in Youth group. I had a bunch of kids that were just this close to being put in jail. I mean, they were criminals waiting to happen. And I called up to Parchment Penitentiary and I said, "Let me ask you a question, could I bring these boys up there and sober them a little bit as to what might be in store for them if they do not shape up?" And the guy said, "Man, that would be awesome." The chaplain did. He said, "You know, I have a couple guys on death row that have been saved and they would love to share their testimony. They are waiting to be executed by the gas chamber here." So I went up to Parchment State Penitentiary there in Drew, Mississippi, took those boys with me. We went out to death row. That's a sobering trip.

We get out and they take us inside. And the first thing I saw was a guy's arm on one side tattoos all over it and the guy's arm on the other side and they are playing cards on the floor, cells down the side, you know. And he took us up to each cell and some of those guys, man, these guys thought they were mean. They understood a new meaning to the word. But some of them had been saved, and they shared their testimony. While we were there they took us over to the gas chamber. Never seen it before; I had never cared to. And they showed these guys what happens when people do bad things.

And so he said, "One of you needs to get inside this gas chamber. I want you to experience it." So all of them grabbed my arm and shouted up. And I think, "I don't want to go in there." Sure enough, I got inside that gas chamber, sat down in a chair. They strapped me down, and, of course, back then it was not by injection. It was by you put the cyanide, or whatever it is into a gaseous thing and it comes in through these vents and obviously it doesn't take long before a person dies. It's a very difficult death.

So I am sitting there, strapped into this chair. They have windows where you can see the witnesses that come to see this. He's talking to me through a microphone that's built in there. And as I was sitting there— he's a clown, much to my chagrin—and while he was talking, he says, "Oh no, Oh no, Oh no! I hit the button. I hit the button. Get the door open!" Oh, man, my heart jumped out of my right ear. I mean, it scared me half to death. See, they had already shut the door and bolted it shut, just like you would if you were fixing to die in that chair. And, man, I sat there and I got to thinking. He said, "I want you to think, Wayne, about all the people that have been here and sat in that very same place and the fact that they had no hope whatsoever."

And that's the only thing I could think about when I thought about today. People that are born into this world are born on spiritual death row. And evangelism starts when we begin to realize what it cost God to save us and we begin to see our friends and our neighbors and the people around us not hearing this message. This is the message; the message is of good news because "Jesus 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." You know what that word "redeemed" is? That word "redeemed" is the word referring to buying back a person's freedom. It means to purchase with a great price, to buy back, to pay a ransom. A ransom had to be paid for you and I to come into this place today and even admit that we are believers. Jesus paid a price for us on the cross. Christ justified those who believe in Him by buying them back.

How did He purchase us back? Well, having become a curse for us. This truly reminds us of what it cost God for you and I to be justified or saved. He quotes Deuteronomy 21:22-23. He says "For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now, none of us will understand the shame that Jesus went through on our behalf. We will never fully grasp that. But he is trying to get it across. He says in Deuteronomy 21:22, "And if a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death and you hang him on a tree his corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day; for he who is hanged is accursed of God so that you do not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you as an inheritance." In ancient Jewish time, when a criminal committed a crime of some kind that was worthy of death, when he was executed, probably by stoning, he was then taken and tied to a post, a type of tree and there his body would hang until sunset and it was to be a visible representation of the rejection of God.

It was not that a person became cursed because he was hung on a tree. Oh, no, he was hanged on a tree because he had already become accursed. Jesus didn't become accursed because He was hung on the cross, He was crucified because He was already cursed. You say, "What do you mean?" He took the full sin of this world, of Jew and of Gentile, upon Himself. He was the Redeemer and that was the price that it took to set us free from the curse of the law. That's what Paul is trying to get across. In 1 Peter 2:24 (note) so beautifully Peter says, "And He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, so that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. For by His wounds you were healed."

And what Paul is saying is do you understand the freedom you have in Christ? He gave the law. He fulfilled the law and then He died for those who could never come close to it. He paid a debt He didn't owe when we owed a debt we couldn't pay. Christ became a curse for us. The Jewish prophet Isaiah had foretold that this was going to happen. This is what Jesus tried to tell those two disciples in Luke on the day of resurrection. "You're not paying attention to everything your prophets have spoken."

Listen to the words of Isaiah 53:1-10: "Who has believed our message? And to whom has the arm of the Lord been revealed? For He grew up before him like a tender shoot and like a root out of parched ground. He has no stately form or majesty that we should look upon Him, nor appearance that we should be attracted to Him. He was despised and forsaken of men, a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, and like one from whom men hide their face, He was despised and we did not esteem Him. Surely our grief's He Himself bore and our sorrows He carried. Yet we ourselves esteemed Him stricken, smitten of God and afflicted. But He was pierced through for our transgressions. He was crushed for our iniquities. The chastening for our well-being fell upon Him and by His scourging we are healed. All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way. But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall upon Him. He was oppressed and He was afflicted, yet He did not open His mouth. Like a lamb that is led to slaughter, like a sheep that is silent before it's shearers so He did not open His mouth. By oppression and judgment He was taken away and as for His generation who considered, who considered that He was cut off out of the land of the living [In other words, anybody paying attention] for the transgression of the people to whom the stroke was due [They paid no attention to Him whatsoever]. His grave was assigned with wicked men, yet He was with the rich man in His death. Because He had done no violence, nor was there any deceit in His mouth. But the Lord was pleased to crush Him, putting Him to grief if He would render Himself as a guilt offering. He will see His offspring. He will prolong His days and the good pleasure of the Lord will prosper in His hand."

The shameful death of Jesus Christ on the cross is the only hope a person has who is on spiritual death row. In order to be justified before God He became a curse for us. This is the only hope Abraham had, even though He would not be born for centuries later. See, salvation was they looked forward to the Redeemer who would one day come. We look back to the Redeemer who has already been here. A sinner, whether Jew or Gentile, must recognize the futility: he is not able to save himself. The freedom we have from the curse of the law was given to us in Jesus Christ. And as we receive Him then we are set free forever to live in the relationship through Him.

Gal 3:13 says "Christ 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.'" Why would He do that? Gal 3:14: "In order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham [that which happened to him in Genesis 15:6] might come to the Gentiles so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." His death on the cross sealed that promise that was made to Abraham. It was the price of our being set free, both Jew and Gentile. Christ set us free!

And you say "Why is he bringing all this up?" Don't you understand the context? Here are people who have been set free from the curse of the law and now have chosen to go right back up under it. Even though they can't lose their salvation they lose all of the joy of their salvation. There's the blessing that should be theirs in Christ they forfeit by putting themselves up under a religious mindset.

So, the freedom we have in Christ: Christ set us all free before there was ever a Jew, before there was ever Israel, before there was ever a law, which was temporary to begin with. Christ promised Abraham something and was the fulfillment of that promise, the freedom we have in Christ. But then secondly, the foundation we have in Christ. I want you to know, our freedom that we have in Christ can't be revoked. Paul is going to approach this in a very unique way. Again, the genius of the Holy Spirit. It's based upon the solid foundation of the Abrahamic Covenant. And, you see, that covenant is an everlasting covenant. The covenant of law is temporary at best, but the covenant to Abraham is everlasting, can never be broken.

He says in Gal 3:15—and he brings it down to a human level so everybody can understand, "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations; even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it was, has been ratified no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it." Literally, when it says "I speak in terms of human relations," Paul is saying, "I speak as a man," or better still, "I speak in the manner of men." In other words, let me take this very complex subject and let me bring it down to where we all live so that you can understand. Paul has been alluding to the covenant that God made with Abraham. In covenants that man makes with man, once it has been made valid, once it has been made legal, then nothing can set it aside, nothing can change the terms of that covenant.

To understand this even better, there are two kinds of covenants. One kind is *syntheke*. It's between two people and can be broken. It's like a marriage. Obviously I wish it was different, but that's the way it is. If somebody fails in that covenant then that marriage ends and there are consequences to pay, but that annuls the covenant. But the word for covenant that's used here is not that word. It's the word *diatheke*. It's much stronger a word. It's the word used in Hebrews 8:6 when he talks about "we are of a better covenant." It can be translated "will or testament." A will, we all understand wills; there are legal terms to a will. In the Greek culture of their day wills and legal documents were sealed so that they couldn't be altered in any way.

In Greek law wills were irrevocable. No one could impose new conditions or no one could remove an heir to a will. If someone tried to replace an existing will with a new one, then the new one was rejected. So Paul says, "Yet when it has been ratified," and he is taking them down to where they live every day, "when a covenant has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it." Now the word "ratified" there is the word *kuroo*. It means to make valid. It means to confirm. When it has been made valid, in other words, when it has been ratified, when it has been made valid, when it has been made legal, no one can add terms to it or conditions to it. "Once a covenant is made valid," Paul says, "no one sets it aside." The term "set aside" is *atheteo*. Here it means no

one can alter or change what has been made valid. It's a binding legal document.

Now, what is Paul doing here? What's he doing? The covenant made with Abraham, now listen to me, was 430 years before the law ever came into existence. That's another covenant. But that other covenant can in no way replace or add to what was given to Abraham. And it cannot in any way reject the heirs. Those who have received Christ by faith cannot be rejected by somebody bringing up another covenant trying to change it and to annul it in any way. The covenant of grace given to Abraham, like a legal document of their day, is indestructible. It's the everlasting covenant of grace. It was ratified to Isaac; it was ratified again to Jacob. It was made valid to both of them. Who became Israel? Jacob became Israel. It can never ever be changed again. "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it."

So what Paul is saying here, do you understand the freedom we have in Christ? He has set us free from the curse of the law. He took us off of spiritual death row. Do you understand the foundation we have in Christ? He's the promise to Abraham. He's the seed, as we will see in a minute. And because of that then nothing, nothing can—it was fulfilled after the law went out of existence; He fulfilled that covenant—it can never be changed. The foundation is solid.

But then finally, the fulfillment we have in Jesus Christ. Why do we meet today? Why is this resurrection Sunday? Why are we called "Christians"? Because we have Christ, who is God, who set us free, who founded us and made us secure. And now the fulfillment we have in Christ. Christ is the fulfillment of the seed promised in the Abrahamic Covenant. You say, "That's a great thought, but show me in Scripture." I am so glad you said that. Have you ever looked at the genealogies? Have you ever looked at those? Some of you say we skip those. Don't skip them. Matthew 1:1, notice how it records Jesus and His genealogy: "The record of the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah." Then he says, "The son of David" and that was through Mary who was in direct line to Nathan, not of Joseph who was in direct line of Solomon whose line was cursed. No, sir. It's through Mary. You track it through the mother, not through the father.

He says, "The record of the genealogy of Jesus, the [[Messiah]], the son of David, the son of," and you know what it says, "Abraham." Well, are you telling me He is connected right there in Matthew 1:1? Absolutely. And Paul does even more than that. He shows in Galatians 3:16 that that seed, Abraham was promised a land; he was promised a nation that would live in that land; who would give birth one day by the [virgin Mary](#)—not by father, but by the virgin Mary—to the Lord Jesus; but it was to be the seed, and he shows you that seed is Christ. Gal 3:16 ([note](#)): "Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed." Then he says, "He does not say and to seeds [plural], as referring to many, but rather to one." And then he clarifies it, "and to your seed."

Don't you understand it? He says, "that is" who? "Christ." There He is right there. These promises were made to Abraham and to his seed, the Lord Jesus Christ who was yet unborn of the virgin Mary when this promise was given. Now, the Jewish mindset, I can understand that. This isn't in any way a slam to anybody. I can understand why they would think this. They would think that the seed would be them, their nation would be the seed. No, a nation is made up of many people. This is masculine singular. After all, they have physical blood kin to Abraham, yes, but this is not what Paul is talking about. Paul says "He," meaning God, "does not say and to seeds" plural. He is not speaking of a nation, seeds, plural. He doesn't say that. "As referring to many, but," the word is singular. He says, "but rather to one." Then he explains who the seed is, "and to your seed," he says "that is Christ."

I tell you what, when you study it out of the old and you see that it has been the plan from the beginning of the Bible, from cover to cover, from before the foundations of the world, how could anybody miss that Jesus Christ is the Redeemer who has come? It was through the nation of Israel, yes, that the seed would be born. He would get His humanity through His mother and the nation of Israel. But He was always God. He became the God-man. Physical Israel was to come from Abraham, yes, but the spiritual seed was to come from Christ. He was going to be that spiritual seed. Spiritual Israel is those who by faith receive Christ. Physical Israel gave the land, that is the nation. But spiritual Israel comes from the seed who is the Lord Jesus Christ.

And you can't go back and invalidate that covenant. Law, the covenant of law, does in no way change the terms that were validated and made legal in that covenant. Israel as a nation has no meaning if Christ is not the promised seed to Abraham. It's just an ongoing same old, same old, year by year. Even the rabbinic Jewish writers agree that Christ is the seed promised to Abraham. They just don't believe He has come yet. I don't see how they missed that, but that's their choice. Only in Christ could all the nations be blessed, Jew and Gentile.

And look over in Galatians 3:28. I want to show you something here. When a Jew comes to know Christ and a Gentile comes to know Christ, they both lose their identity, and they become one new person in Christ. They become one in Christ. Galatians 3:28: "There is neither Jew nor Greek." Isn't it amazing how we still try to distinguish the two. "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." Back to 1 Corinthians 10, I believe it is 1Cor 10:32, he says there are three groups of people, the Jews, and the Gentiles, and the church of God. And Ephesians says the two have become one. And then he adds in Galatians 3:29, "And if you belong to Christ and you are Abraham's offspring," it does not matter if you are Jew or Gentile, "you are heirs according to the promise."

Christ is the seed! He is the seed promised to Abraham, and in him all the spiritual blessings are included. As a matter of fact, Corinthians says “in Him all the blessings of God are given and they are ‘yes’ and ‘amen’ to those of us that are believers.” Paul knows how the Judaizers will refute these. He knows that. And so he adds in Gal 3:17 something that is so profound. “What I am saying is this,” Paul says, “the law which came” now look at this, “430 years later does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God.” God made it legal; God made it valid, “so as to nullify the promise.” The law didn’t even show up as we said earlier twice, until 430 years later after God made His covenant with Abraham. In fact, Moses was not even alive when the covenant was made with Abraham. Paul wants them to think, “Think; use your head. Why are you jumping into this covenant of law when you have been set free from it by a covenant that precedes it by 430 years that God Himself validated?”

Then he explained that Christ was the promised seed in the covenant to Abraham that was long before the law or Israel. Gal 3:17 again, “What I am saying is this, the law which came 430 years later does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise.” The covenant of grace given to Abraham was based on a promise, not on his works. It was ratified, made legal, validated, to Isaac. It was then ratified to Jacob, made legal, validated to Jacob who became Israel, and then Israel finally became a nation. But that promise of the seed was not fulfilled until, as we see in the gospels, in the fullness of time. It cannot be altered. So religion cannot in any way unearth the covenant of grace that was given to Abraham.

Now, you know, the more we are going to stay in this, people are going to say, “Man, it is silly to go back under religion. It doesn’t make any sense.” That’s exactly what Paul is doing. Hopefully, when we finish the book of Galatians, the next time you try to go out and do something for God, God will so stare you in the face and say, “What in the world are you doing? Don’t you understand you’re not of this covenant? This covenant was given for a purpose.” I can hear somebody right now, “Well, why did He give the law to begin with?” I am so glad you said that, because that’s our next message.

You see the logic that Paul is using? That’s the first question that’s going to pop up. Well, if the law cannot change it and the law really isn’t effective anymore, then why in the world did God give it to start with? And so Paul takes that very anticipated question, very proactively answers it, and that’s our next message. Is the law bad? Absolutely not. I wouldn’t know I was speeding if there wasn’t a speed limit sign. You’re going to see why God gave the law and how ingenious and loving He was to give the law.

Gal 3:18: “For if the inheritance is based on law,” instead of a promise, “it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.” How do I become an heir to the promise? You receive it the same way Abraham did, by faith alone, in Christ alone. And when you receive Jesus, the promise was given to Abraham and to his seed, then all the promises are in Him; and when you receive Him you have received it all right there, and He comes to live in you.

What has Christ done for us? The freedom from the curse of the law. He set us free. Paid a gruesome death on the cross for you and I. The innocent perfect lamb of God became sin for you and I so that we could be set free from the curse of the law which put us on spiritual death row. But also the foundation we have in Christ, that covenant that He fulfills was given 430 years before the law was ever thought about. It’s temporary at best. This is the everlasting covenant. This is before the Jews were even thought in most men’s minds. It was in God’s mind. It was in Abraham’s mind, but Abraham was not a Jew. He was a Chaldean. And then the fulfillment that we have in Christ.

You say, “This Scripture is getting awfully heavy.” But, oh, listen to me, isn’t it getting awfully awesome too? I tell you what, next time somebody tries to put their law or the law on you, just smile and turn away and walk in the joy of the Lord because we are not under law. We are not under law. One of the great joys I have as pastoring a church is to let people be free to be who God wants them to be. And you know what I believe that will turn out to be? People serving in the church, people actively involved in the church. I’m not going to beat you up on that. No sir. God will take care of that. He’s a lot better than I am. But you know what I ask of you this morning? I’m going to give you the freedom to be what God wants you to be. I just want to see God make this church, its music, and everything else, I want God to make it what He wants it, not what my opinion makes it. But let me tell you something, I want to ask you to do me a favor. Will you give me the freedom to be who God wants me to be? Because we are free to be what God wants us to be. That’s grace, folks. That’s grace. Oh, what a message that God gives us in Galatians 3.

Galatians 3:19-25 The Purpose of the Law

I want to make sure you’re listening to me—everything, everything that God does, He does with a purpose, even when He gave the law. We have seen some pretty negative things about the law, but I want you to know it had a purpose to it.



Will you turn with me to Galatians 3:19-25. We are going to be looking at a very complex truth today. And pray for me, because it's not an easy one, but yet in a way it is if we could just grasp it. Everything that God does He does with a purpose. Can I say that again? Everything—now let me say it again. I want to make sure you're listening to me—everything, everything that God does, He does with a purpose, even when He gave the law. We have seen some pretty negative things about the law, but I want you to know it had a purpose to it.

We have seen that the superior covenant was the covenant of grace which was given to Abraham 430 years before there was ever the law, before Israel ever became a nation. In the Abrahamic covenant, it says in Galatians 3, "The gospel was preached to Abraham," faith alone in Christ alone. Christ was the seed that was promised Abraham. He was promised a land, Israel; he was promised a nation, Israel; and through that nation would come the seed; that seed would be the Lord Jesus Christ, proving that the gospel is older than the law or Israel. This has been God's plan from day 1, that Jew and Gentile could become a part of His family by faith alone in Christ alone.

But now Paul has beautifully expressed how all that we have promised in Christ—remember it was promised to Abraham, and to his seed—all that God has promised has been given to Christ, and all of that is ours by faith, not by having to measure up to a set of rules which the covenant of law demands. He said in 3:17, "What I am saying is this, the law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God" —you can't bring another covenant over here and change the terms of this covenant which was the pre-eminent one, and that is the covenant of grace. The word "ratified" means made valid—"so as to nullify the promise."

Gal 3:18: "For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise." It is based on performance rather than a promise. "But God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise." And that promise is obtained by faith alone in Christ alone. The law that could not provide the Holy Spirit, Galatians 3:1-5, that could not bring salvation, Gal 3:6-9, that could not alter or change the covenant of grace in Gal 3:15-18, that can only bring a curse in Gal 3:10-12, still has its purpose.

Now, by using the term "law," Paul is speaking of the Ten Commandments, as you will see later on. All of the ceremonial law was simply dove-tailing out of that, because they were found to be sinners because they could not obey that law; therefore, there were certain regulations they had to live by. But that law he's talking about is the Ten Commandments. Paul wants to show us now why the law was ever given in the first place.

Now, I want you to be real honest with me this morning. How many of you have been asking, "Well, if the law is so negative, why did God ever give it?" Does that bother anybody? You just want to raise your hand and say, you know, "I've had that question." Paul says in Romans 7:12 (note), "So then the law is holy and the commandment is holy and righteous and good." Now, wait a minute. We've just seen all the negatives. How can it be holy and righteous and good? What Paul says is it's not bad, so it must have a purpose to it somehow. Well, then, help me out, will you? Why did God give the law?

Well, let's just see what Paul says. And, by the way, I didn't write this. So let's just explain what it says. There are three things that we are going to find beginning in Gal 3:19 about the purpose of the law. First of all is this, the law was only a temporary addition. Isn't it funny how Paul anticipates this question. He anticipates them asking it. He says, "Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made."

Now, Paul, really what he does here gives us sort of a brief, very brief history of the plan of redemption and the plan of salvation. It's just awesome when you begin to realize how God had thought this through so beautifully before it ever came about. Note the phrase, "it was added because of transgressions." The context will show that the law was given to Israel as a nation. And Paul shows us why.

The Abrahamic Covenant was given to Abraham, and it included everyone. This was just strictly given to Israel. The Israelites were a nation totally conceived by God. Now, I have been over this so many times, but sometimes we have folks that haven't been with us before. What do I mean by that? God created this nation. He took Abraham, who was not a Jew; there was no such thing as a Jew; there was not any such thing as an Israelite. He took him out of Chaldea, which was a Babylonian area, Iraq. He took a man like that, He brought him out and He said, "Abraham, I'm going to promise you something. I'm going to promise you a nation, promise you a land, and I am going to promise you a seed." And that seed, of course, is going to be the Lord Jesus Christ. That's when the gospel was preached to Abraham. Abraham had Isaac at 100 years old. And that was his child by faith. His wife was 90. And then Isaac had two sons, Esau and Jacob. But the covenant was ratified to the younger one, which was Jacob. Jacob's name was changed to Israel. Israel had 12 sons. There's your nation, the 12 tribes of Israel. They were totally God's idea and they were there for a purpose, through which the Lord Jesus one day would find His humanity, born of a virgin, the virgin Mary, there in Bethlehem.

But, you see, the reason the law was given was that Israel, they were still sinners like everybody else. The problem was, they didn't see themselves this way. Therefore the law was given, he says, "because of transgressions." God was displeased with their

behavior. The word “added,” of course, means just that. It was an addendum to the Abrahamic Covenant and for only a short period of time. The law was not designed to cancel any promise that was given to Abraham. The law was not designed to give another way of salvation, as some of them believed, through circumcision, the law of Moses. It was simply a temporary addition to this everlasting covenant. It was added because of transgressions.

Now, the law does three things when it comes to sin, and you begin to see the genius of God in giving the law. First of all, the law reveals sin. Romans 3:20 (note), “Because by the works of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for through the law comes the knowledge of sin.” You know, I have used this illustration before I think. But in Montana they didn’t have a speed limit for years. But you know what happened? They had so many wrecks, and actually the state troopers, when they would go out would take their cameras because it was bad. If you had a wreck up there, it was bad. So now they have speed limits. Well, all of a sudden here is somebody driving 90 miles an hour passing a sign that said you could only go 70. Guess what? It was just revealed that he had broken the law. Before there was no law; now there is one, and so the law exposes sin.

But secondly, the law provokes sin. The law provokes sin. You put somebody under a law and sin comes alive; either rebelliously or religiously it will come alive. You always know where I am going to be. Romans 7:8 (note) says, “But sin (**hamartia** - **sin** “**personified**”),” now watch this, “taking opportunity (**aphorme**) through the commandment” [the word “opportunity” there means it builds a base camp and that is where it operates from] “produced in me coveting of every kind. For apart from the law sin is dead.” Sin has no life to it unless you put a law over it. My flesh is going to respond to law.

That’s why God had to give the law. We have to see ourselves as sinners before we will ever turn to the message of grace in the covenant of grace and faith in Christ in Jesus. It’s amazing how many people are trying to get saved and never see themselves as lost. We’ve got to see ourselves as sinners. That’s why God gave the law. And if you don’t think that the law doesn’t somehow initiate sin in your life, it will go one of two ways. You may be the proud goody-two-shoes that you do everything right and everybody else is wrong, but you—that’s just the religious sin mentioned in Romans 2:1-3:20. Or you might be on my side of it, the rebellious side of it, Romans 1:18-32. But one way or another you are going to go that route. You put a law over somebody, the flesh comes alive. It provokes sin.

But the third thing the law does, it multiplies or causes sin to increase. In Romans 5:20 (note), “The law came in so that the transgression would increase. But where sin increased, grace abounded all the more.” God was always covering the bases, but that’s what it was for, for everyone to see themselves as a sinner. Now, it was given to Israel, but it was written on the Gentiles hearts in Romans 1:18-32. So there’s something about all of us that convicts us that we are sinners.

So Paul says, “Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions.” The word **transgression** is the word **parabasis**. It means to cross the line. Israel had crossed the line so many times. But until the law was given, there was no legal offense. You see, the law now causes it to be legal and there is a legal offense. Now they were guilty. There’s no need for a Savior unless there’s an awareness of sin and its consequences. Paul now shows us a tremendous difference between how the two covenants were made, the covenant of grace with Abraham and then 430 years later this temporary covenant of law. He wants us to see the differences here, not so much in the two covenants, but in how they were made. And he brings that out very clearly.

He says in Gal 3:19, “Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions.” Now watch. Here is the first covenant, the second covenant; the latter is the one he talks about first: “having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator.” Now, what is he talking about here? “It was ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator.” Let’s take the first phrase first: “having been ordained through angels.” Now that word “**ordained**” is a key word. It is “**diatasso** (see #6).” It’s a technical term for carrying out laws. It means that something is going to be taken up. Everything is arranged so that it is set in order.

Somehow the angels were involved there. The angels evidently were representatives of God when this covenant was made, when the law was given. And they made sure, or how that works, I don’t know. Yes, God was there when He spoke to Moses. Yes, but that was to Moses. Remember, the covenant was not with Moses, the covenant was with Israel; and Moses represented Israel. He was sort of like an arbitrator. We will see in a minute he is a mediator. But somehow, and we just do not know exactly how. I was studying some of the best people I know just to find out what they said about it. You know what they said about it? “We just don’t know.” So we are going to say this morning that we just don’t know. I’m not going to step out there and say I know when the people I respect haven’t got a clue. But somehow the angels were involved in making certain that the law was carried out, the arrangements, whatever. The word “itself ordained by angels,” has that idea.

But Paul’s point is that the covenant of grace, God spoke Himself to Abraham. It was just the two of them as friend to friend as you’ll see in a minute. But here it was much more indirect when the second covenant was given. Very direct in the first covenant, but very indirect. We’ve already seen the agency of the angels, they were involved.

But not only that, then Paul adds the phrase, “through a mediator.” Now this mediator was Moses. This proves the fact he is talking about the Ten Commandments when he was up on that mountain. The angels were there representing God; Moses was there

representing the people. It was kind of like a court case that was going on here. The word for “mediator” is the word *mesites*. It means an arbitrator that stands between two opposing parties. So a lawyer, in a way; he stands there to arbitrate between two opposing parties. Israel was guilty of sin, period. Moses stood between God and them. He was their mediator.

Now, again, Paul is dramatizing here the difference in the way the two covenants were made to show you the authenticity of that everlasting covenant made with Abraham. When God gave the law the setting was awesome. Now, you have to think about this. If you ever saw the movie “Ten Commandments” somehow that bleeds into our thinking, doesn't it? Well, in a way that's not bad, except we don't have Charlton Heston saying anything here. But the setting was awesome. Remember that? It was very forbidding, very foreboding. You think about when it was given. Burning bush, the burning bush and you see fire and you see thunder and lightning and God's hand writing the commandments on the stone. Man, this was a very awesome setting.

But there was a lot of fear involved in this. It says in Exodus that God warned the people through Moses. He said not to come close to the mountain. You tell those people, says Exodus 19:24, “Then the Lord said to them, ‘Go down and come up again, you and Aaron with you, but do not let the priests and the people break through to come to the Lord or He will break forth upon them.’” You just sense that when that covenant of the law was made, oh, there was fear and darkness and fire and it was so awesome and so forbidding.

But God gave the covenant of grace to Abraham as friend to friend. Isn't that a beautiful analogy here of what Paul is doing? I didn't write this. He's putting the difference of how they were made and he's trying to say something here. The promise of salvation by faith alone in Christ alone was so precious to God that He gave it to Abraham in person, no mediator, no angels, no warnings, no fire and smoke in the sense of the way the second covenant was inaugurated.

This is the way God wants a person to come to Him. And if you don't know the Lord Jesus Christ, understand His heart. This is how He wants you to come. He wants you to come not out of fear, but out of faith and the promise that will be yours in the Lord, Jesus Christ.

It was so beautiful when He ministered to Abraham. It was so fearful when the covenant of law was given. So he says in Gal 3:19 again, “Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator.” But then Paul shows the temporary nature of the law, that it was only given for a short time. It was there for a purpose. It was good. It was righteous. It was not bad, but it had a purpose to it.

And what was that time period? He says, “Until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.” This temporary covenant was only good until Christ came, you see. What do I mean by that? Well, we know the seed is Christ because of Gal 3:16. We have already studied that. So when Christ came, why did He put aside the law? I will tell you how; because He came as a man, God-man, born of a virgin. And what did He do? He fulfilled everything that the law required, and it was no longer valid after He fulfilled it.

Oh, I can't wait until we get to Galatians 5, because that's going to make a question come up in your mind, well, did God throw away the Ten Commandments? Hold on to that question till we get to Galatians 5. It's going to light your fire when you get over there. The standard that God requires is still there, but I want to tell you how it is manifested and I will just go ahead and preempt it. The Lord Jesus produces the love that the law requires. He says the law is fulfilled in one word, love. And Gal 3:22 says the fruit of the Spirit is that love. He says, “Until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.”

Now the contrast, the covenants, He does it one more time. He's trying to show the temporary nature of the law, the temporary addendum through the covenant of grace with Abraham. And he says in Gal 3:20, “Now a mediator is not for one party only.” You have to have two opposing parties in order to have a mediator, an arbitrator. But then he say, “Whereas God is only one.” Now Paul shows when there is more than one party, buddy, you have got a different kind of situation. You have two2 opposing parties. But God is only one. And what is he doing here? There were two parties at the covenant of law, as we have already said. There was Israel and God and they were opposed, in the sinfulness of Israel and they were worshiping the golden calf while God was giving the Ten Commandments to Moses on the mountain. He was a mediator that had to stand between the two; he is a type of Christ in the Old Testament, two opposing parties.

But then he said, “God is only one.” Now, what's he talking about? When the first covenant was made—and how many times have we been over this—but back in Genesis 15 God cut a covenant with Abraham. And what did He do? He took the animals and cut them in half and that was the sacrifice to show the great penalty that would have to be paid to have covenant. And He entered in between those two halves and He entered in by Himself. God did. And the description of God there is the same description of Jesus in the book of Revelation. Everything from His feet all the way up. And He walked between, the path. (**Covenant- A Walk Into Death**)

Well, where was Abraham, because aren't two parties involved in a covenant? He put Abraham to sleep and God—one—no opposing anything, God came in and built the everlasting covenant; not on the faithfulness of men, but on the faithfulness of God

and that is the difference in the two covenants right there. It took two, and he had to have a mediator between the other two. There were two opposing parties and the law said you obey or you die. If you do obey you can live, but if you don't obey, you die. Well, nobody could obey, and so He condemned all men. But when the Lord Jesus walked between those two halves in Genesis 15, a theophany, when Christ came down and cut that covenant, it was not based on man's faithfulness to God; it was based on God's faithfulness to man.

And what Paul is doing, he's contrasting these two covenants. The law demanded performance. And the moment it did, it condemned the man because of his performance, because the standard could not be attained. The law was only a temporary addition until the seed could come.

So we see the first thing then. Does the law have a purpose? Absolutely, but it was temporary. It was an addendum. It was an addition. It was given because of transgressions, until the seed could come and pay the debt for those sins and also fulfill every law that was there so that He could be our representative and then He would stand between the Father and us and He could offer us the promise that was promised to Abraham and to the seed which was the Lord Jesus Christ.

The second thing about the law is this that Paul brings out. The law had a specific assignment and that was in Gal 3:21. What it is, it's to prepare us for grace. It says in Gal 3:21, "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God?" He says, "May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life or salvation, then righteousness would indeed have been based upon law;" man could attain it. The word "contrary" here in Gal 3:21 is the word *kata*, and it means to be against something. Paul is telling us that the law is not against the promises of God. That's not why it was added. He says, "May it never be!" That phrase is used 11 times in Romans and three times in Galatians. It means that's absurd, that's absurd. We have seen this before. When you drive up in a parking space and a sign says "Don't even think about it!" That's "may it never be!" Alright, it means something that is absurd. It is like Paul stops and says "What? What do you mean the law annuls any promise that was given to Abraham? Why, that's absurd! Don't ever ask that question again."

Now he says, "Is the law then contrary to the promises of God or against the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based upon law." Now, what Paul says is that the only way the law could be against the promises of God in the Abrahamic covenant would be if the law could somehow produce life or produce salvation. Then there would be two options, is basically what you would end up with, for someone to be saved. The Jews could attain salvation through the law and the Gentiles by faith in Christ. But Paul says, no, you can't have that. It's totally contrary to the promises of God. These promises of God were made to Abraham on the basis of faith and that stands. The law in no way contradicts this.

Well, if any man, Jew or Gentile, trusts the Lord Jesus Christ, then he inherits the promises that were given to the Lord Jesus. But the law cannot affect any of that. So it's not against it at all. The law was not given to be contrary to the promises. Its assignment then is found in Gal 3:22: "But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe."

Now, this is interesting. He uses the word "Scripture." (**graphe**) You see, Scripture upholds the law. God speaks through Scripture and the law is in Scripture. The law was the very tool God used; this is so interesting to me, how God thought this through; to keep man from ever thinking that there was any other way to salvation. The law was the very tool. It shut all men up under sin. Actually, Paul draws a picture for us. The law is the standard of character that God requires, that no man except the God-man has ever attained. The Scripture is the magistrate who upholds the standard. And all men are sinners to death because they cannot meet the standard, and so it builds up four walls around it. No man can get outside those walls. He is shut up under sin, Jew and Gentile.

The word for "shut up" is the word **suglleio**. It's an interesting word. **Sun/syn**, which means together with and then **kleio**, which means to close. All men are together. This is the one thing that's the common denominator between all mankind, whether Jew or Gentile. We are all shut up under the law. We are sinners, period, and that's what the law was given to do. We are closed up on all sides. The law hems all men up. No man can attain its standard.

Now, I know that there are those who think they can. Now, I want to promise you if you think you can, tomorrow when you get up, just simply say, "I want to live Jesus today," because He's the only One who has ever done it. And just say you are going to be like Jesus. I want to promise you, God has a brother in store for you that you did not know existed. And by noon tomorrow He is going to drop you right in his lap, and the law requires you not only to love the Lord your God with all your heart, your mind, your soul and your strength, but to love your neighbor as you love yourself. And you are going to find by 1:00 tomorrow, "I can't love this brother. I don't even like this brother." And you are going to cry out to God and say, "God, I can't," and God is going to say, "Thank you, thank you." So you are hemmed up with the rest of the bunch aren't you? So you're a sinner like everybody else.

My daughter would get up at 6:00 in the morning to get ready for school. About an hour later I would get up about 7:00 and she would still be brushing her hair. I would go by the door, and I would say, "We leave at 8:00." "I hear you daddy." Well, about 10

minutes to 8 I would go by again. "Stephanie." "I hear you daddy." So my son and I would go out in the car and sit and wait on her to come on out. We got to know each other real well during those times. And when Stephanie would come out, she's always running late. She's frustrated. Her hair has frizzed. And every day she would get into the car and she would come out and say something really profound. I mean, it was wonderful. And one morning she came out and she stepped on the back deck and her feet just went out from under her and she hit the floor. She was going to a Christian school, had her little dress on, had her hose on and everything. She tore her hose, busted up her knee, and she is running late, so she can't go back inside. She gets in the car, slams the door. And I am backing up and she says, "Daddy!" I said, "What?" She said, "I want to tell you something." I said, "What is it?" She said, "I don't care what you preach, nobody can live the Christian life."

You know, by the time we got to the school, God showed me she is exactly right. There's none of us can. That's what the law was for to begin with; to show us what we are not able to do. Only Christ can save us and only Christ can sanctify us. There are too many times I think I know enough and I have achieved enough that I can do it. But my daughter reminded me I can't do it." That's why Paul said in Galatians 2:20, it's not me, it's Christ living in me. Jesus, the seed promised to Abraham, came to fulfill that law that condemns all mankind. We are all shut up together, Jew, Gentile. We are all sinners. Nobody has attained that law. He is the One who took our penalty upon Himself when we deserved it.

Well, Christ is the only One who can live the Christian life. He's the only One who ever lived it. The law's requirements showed us all up under sin. But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. And then Paul becomes even more specific. He said the Scripture had shut up all men. And then he said, "But before faith came we were kept in custody under the law." He wants to make sure you have got this point. Scripture upholds the law. It's a part of Scripture. It upholds it. "Being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed." Christ is the essence and the object of our faith and He had not yet come, and so the law shut all men up under sin. And those who have received Jesus are out from under that. The door has been opened. No man comes to the Father except by Me. Jesus said, "I am the door in which men may enter." Is there a way out of this? Yes, there is.

The law was only a temporary addition. The law had a specific assignment. But now, finally, the law, because of Christ, has been annulled. Gal 3:24: "Therefore the law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith." I will tell you what, when you think of salvation you cannot help but get excited about what he is saying right here. The word for "**tutor**" is the word [**paidagogos** \(see B-2\)](#). It comes from the word *paideia*, which means child. And what it had to do with was a schoolteacher or a schoolmaster. Some people even say it like a babysitter, which is really more correct, because originally it referred to a slave who conducted boys, of course, to school and back home, because you know boys have a tendency to stray. And so they made sure that when they left the house they got to where they were designed to go. They made sure they got there.

What an awesome picture! You want to know what the law is all about? God used it as a child conductor; He used it as a babysitter to make sure that we got from the place of sin separated from Him to the place of promise by putting our faith into Him. The law was actually a tutor for you and I. If we hadn't seen ourselves as sinners we would have never been ready for grace. It was to frustrate mankind, to get them ready for the promise of grace that came with the Lord Jesus, who was the seed that was promised to Abraham.

Well, what an awesome picture. We sing this song, "[**I Can Only Imagine**](#)," you know. And when I start thinking about all that salvation offers, do you realize what we are experiencing today is nothing more than the earnest of our inheritance? Do you realize that? Everything that we are talking about, every victory that we have in Jesus today is just a little bit of an earnest; the down payment hasn't even come yet. We don't have a clue yet what is reserved for us, but we need to understand why we have what we have. The role of the schoolteacher or schoolmaster or one of these child conductors was never a permanent thing in their culture. There came a day when a child became of age and when he became of age that was quite a celebration, because now he's cut loose. He has earned the rite of passage. He has finally stepped into adulthood. He does not need that childhood conductor anymore.

Do you realize what coming of age is talking about spiritually in Scripture? That's when we come to know the Lord Jesus Christ, the seed that has come. We have put our faith in Him as Abraham did. Now we become heirs of the promise that was given to Abraham and to his seed. And on that particular day, when we receive the Lord Jesus Christ, at that moment we come of age and we put away childish things. That is what Paul was talking about in 1 Corinthians. He said I have put away childish things. Don't give me religion again. Don't give me a set of rules again. Give me a relationship with God through His Son Jesus Christ. I want to learn to walk by faith. That's what salvation is all about.

What the Galatians had done was to go back and put themselves under a child conductor. Why would you do that if you have already come of age? Why would you want to be back up under this particular bondage? "Therefore the law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ so that we may be justified by faith." Then Paul drives his point home in Gal 3:25. "But now that faith has come, now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." Remember, the law was only good till Jesus came. Jesus is the essence

and the object of faith. He produces the faith. And when we receive Him into our hearts the law is now annulled. It can't condemn us anymore. It can't control us anymore. Christ lives in us. The one who gave the law, the one who fulfilled the law, lives in me. So you that love the law, just go on and love Jesus, because He fulfilled it. And when you say yes to Him, don't worry about it; that law is going to be fulfilled as we will see in Gal 5.

I want to tell you something, folks. When this church begins to walk in that relationship, the signal will be in the relationships of this church body. When we start loving one another in the love that Jesus is producing within us, when all of a sudden we lay down our fleshly agendas and God begins to love through us, then what we have just done has shown and proved that the law has been annulled and is now being fulfilled by the one who gave it and by the one who enables it to be fulfilled as He produces His character in and through our lives. Christ is the essence and object of our faith. He is the seed promised to Abraham. He is the one to whom the promises have been given. The law was a temporary addition. The law had a specific assignment. The law, because of Christ, has been annulled.

Is the law bad? Oh, no! When you see it this way, oh, give us the law because it shuts us all up under sin, and every man is a sinner in desperate need of the seed, Christ, who has already come. It served the purpose for which God gave it. What awesome salvation! You know, I read this to you when I first came and I just feel like God put on my heart this morning to read it again. If you want law, help yourself. But if you want Christ, here is what you have in Him. And to walk in that relationship, just in trusting Him, here is what you have:

He is the first and the last; the beginning and the end. He is the keeper of creation and the Creator of all. He is the architect of the universe and the manager of all time. He always was. He always is and He always will be unmoved, unchanged, undefeated, and never undone. He was bruised and brought healing. He was pierced and He eased pain. He was persecuted and brought freedom. He was dead and brought life. He has risen and brings power. He reigns and brings peace. The world cannot understand Him. The armies cannot defeat Him. The schools cannot explain Him and the leaders cannot ignore Him. Herod could not kill Him. The Pharisees could not confuse Him. And the people could not hold Him. Nero could not crush Him. Hitler could not silence Him. The new age cannot replace Him and the talk show hosts cannot explain Him away. He is light, love, longevity and Lord. He is goodness, kindness, gentleness, and God. He is holy, righteous, mighty, powerful and sure. His ways are always right. His Word is eternal. His will is unchanging and His mind is on me. He is my Redeemer. He is my Savior. He is my guide and He is my peace. He is my joy. He is my comfort. He is my Lord and He rules my life. I serve Him because His bond is love, His burden is light and His goal for me is eternal life. I follow Him because He is the wisdom of the wise, the power of the powerful, the Ancient of Days, the Ruler of rulers, the Leader of leaders, the Overseer of the overcomers and the sovereign Lord of all that was and is and is to come. And if that seems impressive to you try this on for size. His goal is a relationship with me. He will never leave me, never forsake me, never mislead me, never forget me, never overlook me, and never cancel my appointment in His appointment book. When I fall He lifts me up. When I fail He forgives. When I am weak He is strong. When I am lost He is the Way. When I am afraid He is my courage. When I stumble He steadies me. When I am hurt He heals me. When I am broken He mends me. When I am blind He leads me. When I am hungry He feeds me. When I face trials He is with me. When I face persecution He shields me. When I face problems He comforts me. When I face loss He provides for me. When I face death He carries me home. He is everything for everybody, everywhere, every time and every way. He is God. He is faithful. I am His and He is mine. My Father in heaven can whip the father of this world. So if you are wondering why I feel so secure, understand this, He said it and that settles it. God is in control. I am on His side and that means all is well within my soul. Every day is a blessing for God is! That is who Jesus Christ is. He is the seed that was promised to Abraham. And the promises were given to both. That is who He is.

Now, do you want to go back up under a set of rules? Is that what you want? Do we really want a child conductor today? Is that what we want? Is that what we really want? Evidently the Galatians did and they were believers. And that is why he said in Gal 3 to start this whole chapter, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Listen, anything you are trying to attempt to do for Him, if you will just submit to Him He will do for you and that is the difference right there. There is your contrast. Why the law? I am kind of glad it is around, aren't you? That is what got us to grace. That is what got us to grace. I am so glad I did not write this. I could not be smart enough to get in out of the rain. I am so glad God wrote it and so we wrestle with what He says, don't we.

Galatians 3:26-29 Sons of God

Now in Christ Jesus we are made sons of God by faith. And that's what we are going to look at today. It is through Christ that we are set free from the bondage to the law. We're completely set free. So when a person chooses to go back and be religious again he has just simply chosen his flesh over choosing Jesus to be Jesus in his life. When we trust Christ as our Savior, we enter the family

of God.



Galatians 3:26-29. Paul says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to promise."

I'm so grateful that the Scripture has made this turn. The last time we were together we looked at what the law was all about. We saw that it does have a purpose. We learned from Galatians 3 in studying these verse by verse that it could not produce the Holy Spirit, Gal 3:1-5. It cannot do that; only Christ can. It could not produce salvation in Gal 3:6-9. It puts people under a curse in Gal 3:10-12. And in Gal 3:15-18 it could not in any way alter the Abrahamic covenant that was given to Abraham. But it had its purpose, and it is so interesting to me. God used it for a specific reason.

We found out that that purpose was only temporary, in Gal 3:19-25, until the seed came. And that seed, of course, as we have seen in Gal 3:16 is the Lord Jesus Christ. It is in Christ, not in the law that we find salvation. The law sets a standard. It was usable to God because it provoked sin. It exposes sin. It sets a standard that no man can live up to. He is speaking here of the Ten Commandments, that particular moral law of God. The Lord Jesus came as a man. He that gave the law came as a man and fulfilled that very law and then He took its penalty, which was death. All of us were born under the penalty of spiritual death, and yet He took that penalty for us, went to the cross, paid a debt He did not owe. We owed a debt we could not pay, resurrected the third day, ascended and now sends His Spirit to live in us. And every time we say yes to Him the law is consistently being met by the love that He produces.

And as Romans so beautifully puts it in Romans 8:3 (note), it says, "For what the law could not do"—and I love the beautiful way this is put—"weak as it was through the flesh, God did, sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin He condemned sin in the flesh, so that the requirement of the law might be fulfilled in us who do not walk according to the flesh but according to the Spirit."

Now in Christ Jesus we are made sons of God by faith. And that's what we are going to look at today. It is through Christ that we are set free from the bondage to the law. We're completely set free. So when a person chooses to go back and be religious again he has just simply chosen his flesh over choosing Jesus to be Jesus in his life. When we trust Christ as our Savior, we enter the family of God. We are now the children of Abraham, but much more than that. We are the sons of God by faith. What does it mean to be a son of God? Do you realize that if you are a believer you are a son of God? And he puts it exactly that way. That's the phrase used to characterize believers.

Well, we're going to talk about sonship today. The law can't provide it, but in Jesus we have sonship in the family of God. First of all, as sons we have an eternal destiny. Oh, and this is so exciting. It says in Gal 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." Now, when he says "for you are all," the word he uses there is a little word *pas*. *Pas* means each and every one of you and all of you when put together.

You say, "We know that." Now wait a minute, wait a minute. I'm saying that for a reason. He says, "you are all," both Jewish believer and Gentile believer, you are all sons of God. Now, that statement would have been very acceptable to the Gentiles. Actually, overwhelming. But I would imagine it would have been a hard pill to swallow if you were a Jewish believer. They never saw the Gentiles as being included in their covenants. Remember Gal 3:7-8, Paul has already addressed this. He says, "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham." Then he said, "The Scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, 'All nations [and Israel was not a nation at that time] will be blessed in you,'" Jew and Gentile. So, everyone that has put their faith into Christ, whether Jew or Gentile, are all sons of God.

He says, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." And that term, "sons of God" tells us volumes. You say, how do you get so much out of a word? You know, it's just the way the Greek is so specific. The word "sons of God" there, the word "sons" is the key word. It's equivalent to the sons of Abraham in Gal 3:7, but it's much higher than that. We are sons of God. The meaning is a bit hidden, but it's very clear when it's understood. The word "sons" is the plural form of the word [huios](#). To help you understand this word we must look at some other words, because in the Greek language there are several words to denote a child in the family.

The first one we want to look at is the word **teknon**. **Teknon** means a birth child. In other words, it bears the image of the father. The second word is the word **nepios**, which means a baby that is unable to walk and unable to talk. And then thirdly, the word is [paidion](#) ([see #5](#)) which refers to a child that is growing but certainly needs a lot of instruction. Our word however is [huios](#). It stresses the maturity of a child. It's a child who is absolutely in sync with his father. Everything the child does is a reflection of the will of his father. It refers to a mature child.

Now Jesus is always in Scripture [huios](#). He is never called anything else when it comes to His title. He is the Son of God. He is eternally the Son of God. He came to earth as the Son of Man. He has never called the **teknon** of God. He is never called the [huios](#) of God. He is never called the [paidion](#) of God. It is always [huios](#) of God. He is only called the **teknon** of Mary once, because you

see He was the birth child of the virgin Mary, but He is always called the [huios](#) of God, the mature Son of God. Hebrews says that everything He did was a reflection of the Father. He and the Father were one.

Now with this in mind isn't it interesting that Paul chooses under the leadership of the Holy Spirit of God to call all of us that have become believers as [huios](#) of God, the mature sons of God? Think about it for a second. Did you live that way this past week? Was everything that you do this past week a reflection of the Father? Every word that came out of your mouth was a reflection of the heart of God? Did your conversation and speech, was it wrapped in the love that when Jesus spoke always had that there? You see, but yet we are called [huios](#). None of us have arrived to the place of maturity to where we move and we act as a reflection of the Father.

Those who have trusted Christ as their Savior are not called *nepios* in Galatians 3 as they are, some of them in 1 Corinthians 3:1. Paul tells them you are little babies and will not come out of the nursery. That is not what Paul refers to us as Galatians 3. Not only that, [paidion \(see #5\)](#) is not our terminology that he uses there or his terminology. And in Hebrews 2:13 he uses that word to describe those believers. He is not calling us *teknon* as in Galatians 4:28. He calls us [huios](#).

Now there's a reason it's used right there and for this purpose. By using the word [huios](#) there's a wonderful truth that when we got saved there's a process that began the moment Christ came to live in our heart. We are destined one day to be in total oneness with Him. Even though that's the title given to us, positionally now, one day, experientially, we will walk that way with God. So what he has given us here is a preview of what we will be one day.

In Ephesians 1:5-note it says "He predestined us [*proorizo* - that's a good word] to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ to Himself according to the kind intention of His will." The word for adoption is the word *huiiothesia*. It's the word that takes that word [huios](#), which is our word, mature sons, and adds with it *thesami*, which means to place, to place in a position of sonship. We are predestined to sonship. Now take this to Romans 8:19-note and you begin to learn a little bit about this. It says this: "For the anxious longing of the creation waits eagerly for the revealing of the sons of God." Now one of these days we are going to be revealed as to who we really are. We are masked with a body of human flesh right now, and inside of us is the Spirit of God. And one day it is going to be revealed that we are the mature sons of God.

However, look at Romans 8:23-note. It says "And not only this, but also we ourselves having the firstfruits of the Spirit [that's believers], even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting eagerly for our adoption as sons," then look what he equates it with, "the redemption of our body." We see that our adoption is a process. Even though we are given the title as mature sons now, we in no way have arrived there. But there's going to come a day at the redemption of our body, when we get a glorified body, that we are going to arrive there, and then experientially we will be like Him. We will never be God. There are two absolutes: One, is there is a God; and two, you are not Him. You write that down. You will never be Him and I will never be Him. We are not going to become little gods. But we will be like Him. It says, "we eagerly await the adoption as sons."

Now, there's a day coming. The apostle Paul talked about it in Philippians when he says "I look forward to the upward call of God." He was called from heaven on the Damascus road. He will be called to heaven one day, and he was already hearing that beckoning call. He knows where he is headed, on that day He's going to transform, He says, our body, out of our humble estate. We will on that day be glorified. On that day our will and His will will be one.

I want you to turn with me to 1 Corinthians 13:8-12 (notes). I want you to see this as it is worked out. It's a beautiful hope that each of us have, a beautiful hope. Paul has been talking to a church that knows nothing about Christianity. They are babies. They are immature. Everything they do they just want to be appeased. They want their flesh to be satisfied, and Paul deals with them all through Corinthians about this. In 1Cor 13:1-7 many people call this, this whole chapter a chapter on love. No, sir, it's not. It's an indictment to a church that knows nothing about it. And what he's trying to show them is what you're doing has nothing to do with the Christianity you profess.

He says in 1Cor 13:8-note, "Love never fails." He breaks his chain of thought. He's not talking now in relationships one to one. Now he's talking about God's love for them. Even though Corinth was upside down, God's love would not fail them. He says "God's love never fails: but if there are gifts of prophecy, they will be done away; if there are tongues, they will cease; if there is knowledge, it will be done away. For now we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when the perfect comes," now some great scholars much smarter than I am say that that means the Word of God, and I want to challenge that. I don't think it means the Word of God. I don't think that at all, and I'll show you why.

It says, "When the perfect comes, the partial will be done away with." Now, in 1Cor 13:11, "When I was a child I used to speak as a child, think as a child, reason as a child; when I became a man I did away with childish things," he's talking about his [\[\[salvation\]\]](#). There was that time of coming of spiritual age and you put away religion; you put away the ABC's and you walk in a wonderful relationship with Christ. And that's what [\[\[salvation\]\]](#) is, putting away childish things. But then in 1Cor 13:12, "For now we see in a mirror dimly; but then." Now, you see, now look at the time words there. "Now" and then "then". When is the then? When the perfect

comes. He has already told you. "When the perfect comes we will see [how?] face to face." Oh man, can you ever get excited about that?

There's going to come a day we're going to stand and we're going to see the Lord Jesus face to face in all of His glory. I love that song, "I Can Only Imagine." We don't know what we'll do at that time. We have no idea. Somebody says I will sing, I will praise, who knows? It's just going to be a wonderful time.

But when we see Him face to face, it says, "Now" right now, "I know in part." That's all I know. I'm so glad Paul said that. He included himself. He said, "I know." As a matter of fact he said "I know in part." I love it when people walk up to me and say, "What about this" and "what about that?" And all I can say is, "Man, I don't know, I just know in part." That just makes me feel better anyway. "Now I know in part." We don't have all the answers. My goodness, we don't have all the answers; we have just enough to get us through this life and just enough of what God wanted to tell us.

But you just wait. What's coming after that? "Now I know in part. But then," when? When the perfect comes, when I see Him face to face, "I shall know fully just as I have also have been fully known." Do you realize what he's saying? The Lord Jesus has fully known us and fully loved us since before the foundation of the world. Why? Because to know is to love. He has fully loved me since before the foundation of this world. Do you think I can commit a sin today that catches Him off guard? He knew about it long before I was ever created. He knew you. He knew me. He loved us in spite of us. Can you believe that? He loved us and He fully loved us and fully knew us.

But there's going to come a day when we see Him, and in that moment when we see Him, we are going to know Him as He has already known us. We don't know Him that way now. You know how I know? Because we don't love Him fully right. Just by the looks on your faces when I asked how many of you were a reflection of the Father in everything you did this past week, tells me you have not arrived either, just like the apostle Paul said. You see, we haven't gotten to that point yet. We don't fully know Him. If we fully knew Him we would fully love Him. And in that moment when we see Him face to face we're going to know Him as He has always fully known us. I don't know how that's going to happen, but in that very second of knowing Him we're going to love Him as He has fully loved us. And in that moment when we see Him face to face, that upward call of God, that glorification of our body, the redemption of our body, in that moment my will and your will and His will will become one will and we will walk together forever and ever as the mature sons of God, a reflection of the Father.

Now that is what he is talking about. Now do you realize, do you understand what's coming? But do you also realize we already have that position? We haven't experienced it yet, but it's our position. It means that right now when it's no longer me, but Christ in me, I get to experience the full privileges of being an adult son of the living God. I get to walk in the joy that Jesus said "I want you to have My joy." I get to walk in His peace. I get to experience what He experienced as the true Son of God, the reflection of the Father. If I choose to go back under religion, if I choose to go back after the flesh I forfeit that privilege. My privileges are only in the Lord Jesus Christ. But one day, one day when I see Him face to face in that moment I am going to become like Him.

I'll be honest with you, I'll be so glad to shed this old presence of flesh. Won't you? I've been delivered from its penalty, and daily He is seeking to deliver me from its power. But one day we are going to be delivered from the presence of sin. We aren't going to have to deal with all the garbage that the flesh has to put up with. It will not be "churches," it will be one Church, one body of Christ, standing before God who is holy, and we will be a reflection of the Father forever and ever and ever. It will never happen down here, but it will happen one day.

But what he's saying here to these believers, do you want to go back up under law? You think the law produces anything like this? You want to walk in the full adult privileges of sonship with the Lord Jesus Christ? You can't do that and go back up under the law. All you have is religion that denies the power thereof. If you want to walk in that sonship, if you want to walk in the privileges of that sonship, then you have to come to that place of abandonment to Him and say, "yes, Lord, yes Lord, yes, yes, Lord" and live that way, and then He manifests Himself in you.

That's when we walk in the full adult privileges of being a son in the family of God. Positionally we are there; experientially we are not there yet. But when our bodies are redeemed one day we will be like Him forever and ever and ever. He says we are sons of God by faith in Christ Jesus. Believers are sons of God by faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, not in the law.

Well, are you walking in the privileges of sonship? Are you living in the privileges of sonship? Boy, there's a lot of people that can quote scripture and tell you about freedom, but they live in bondage everyday because they're not willing to say yes to the very One who can help them enjoy the privileges of sonship. Well, that is the first thing. We have an eternal destiny. A process began. One day we will arrive at the position He has already given to us.

Secondly, as sons we have a clear identity. We have a clear identity. You want to know what the common denominator of Christianity is? He's going to tell you right here. Gal 3:27: "For all of you who are baptized into Christ," look at this, "have clothed yourselves with Christ." That's interesting and powerful. We need to understand that phrase. There are two meanings of the word

“baptism” in Scripture. The first meaning is water baptism. A believer being immersed into water is something he does as a public testimony. This comes after the fact of what happened inwardly. He does it now outwardly. This is the first act of Christian witness that a person has amongst his friends.

And if you go back to the book of Acts, the first church there was the Jewish believers. And when they would be baptized wherever, mostly the Jordan River, when they would be baptized and came up out of that water, the people wrote them off. They were signed as if they were dead. They were disinherited from the family and it was a separation from that which was behind and it was an entering into that which has been totally new. Many have made the mistake of thinking that water baptism has anything to do with salvation. It does not. They fail to explain what Paul says in 1 Corinthians 1:17, when he says, “For Christ did not send me to baptize”—that to me, anybody, it is a no-brainer; if you just read the scripture—“but to preach the gospel, not in cleverness of speech that the cross of Christ should not be made void.”

Water baptism is not a part of the gospel. He said “I came to preach the gospel.” As a matter of fact, he goes on to say, “I do not know if I baptized any of you.” In other words, it’s not a big deal to him. It’s somebody else, that’s their act of public witness. What he came to do was to preach the gospel. If water baptism is a part of the gospel then all of Galatians needs to be thrown out of your Bible, because Galatians has already shown us that there isn’t any work of human flesh that can in any way add to what Christ has done for us on the cross. Only faith alone in Christ alone is our salvation.

But the other meaning of baptism is what he has here. The other meaning is our spiritual baptism that takes place at salvation. At the very moment you receive Jesus you are immersed into Him. You are immersed into His death, His burial, His resurrection, into His presence, into His power. You are immersed into oneness with Him. By Paul using the phrase, “baptized into Christ” not baptized into water, but baptized into Christ, then you know immediately what he is talking about. It is a spiritual baptism. It says in Gal 3:27 again, “For all of you who were baptized in Christ”—and then look what it does; he says—“have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Now this equates the baptism he talks about, this spiritual baptism with being clothed with Christ.

He’s speaking of our spiritual immersion into Christ and having become identified with who He is as He now lives in us. This is what he’s talking about in Romans 6. I have told you, you know that Galatians is just Paul writing Romans mad. And in Galatians it is bump, bump, bump, bump, bump, but in Romans it is bump and then he stops and explains; and then it bump and he stops and explains; and bump. I mean, the doctrine is all over here in Romans.

In Romans 6:3 it says, “Or do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus have been baptized into His death? Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death so that as Christ was raised from the dead to the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. For if we have become united with Him in the likeness of His death certainly we shall also be in the likeness of His resurrection.”

And the beautiful picture of this is, if I had a bowl of red dye I could explain it to you. A clear bowl of red dye, and I took a white cloth and I am going to put that white cloth down into that red dye. I immerse it into it, completely submerge it into the red dye. Now, the cloth is in the dye, but the moment it gets inside the dye, something else happens, doesn’t it? The dye gets inside the cloth, and the cloth is no longer a white cloth. There has been a change. Something has been identified with it. The red dye has entered into the cloth and now you have a red cloth. That’s exactly what he’s talking about here. That is spiritual immersion into Christ and Him into us. The spiritual baptism that he speaks of here is what he refers to in Ephesians 4:4. “There is one body and one Spirit just as also you were called in one hope of your calling: one Lord, one faith, one baptism.” He’s not talking about water baptism. He’s talking about the spiritual immersion into Christ.

Now this phrase that he equates this with, “you have been clothed,” you have clothed yourselves with Christ, is a graphic illustration of what happens at salvation. His presence, His power, all of who He is comes to live in us. It envelops the believer. You say, “I remember when I got saved. I had a lot of joy in my heart, but I didn’t know this took place.” And by the way, I didn’t write this. I mean, this is what God says took place. At the moment we were saved whether we felt it or didn’t feel it, God came to live in us and His presence now saturates our very being.

Now, I want to share something with you. There’s no such thing as a believer who is not clothed with Christ. Can I say that again? There is no such thing as a believer who is not clothed with Christ. You say, “Wait a minute wait a minute. I know believers and I have been one myself, and if you are telling me I am clothed with Christ? I haven’t lived that way all the time.” And that’s exactly the point in Galatians 3. Inwardly we are clothed with Christ. You don’t ever get any more of God than you are going to get at the moment of salvation. But is He seen outwardly? Remember, Paul says in Philippians “work out your salvation.” Let the Jesus who is on the inside be seen on the outside. And the same way that you are clothed with Christ, by faith, is the same the way He’s manifest that clothing in your life. He manifests His character in your life.

I will tell you what. As long as I pastor churches, and it will be that way till Jesus comes back, you wonder sometimes if people know Christ from a hole in the ground. We sing the hymns. We sing the choruses. We walk right out and act as if we don’t even know Him.

And yet we are clothed with Christ. You see, this is the whole point. If it's going to be Christ living in you, then all that's within you begins to be manifested through your life. Paul says this to believers in Romans. He tells them in Romans 13:14-note, "But **put on** (aorist imperative) the Lord Jesus Christ." You already have put Him on. I know inwardly. What he's saying is, put Him on as your behavior. Make sure He is manifested in your life. And he goes on and tells you how. "And **make** (present imperative) no provision for the flesh in regard to its lusts."

You see, they have put Him on, but now put Him off. It is two different things here. At [[salvation]] He came to live in you and the clothing is there. The garment is there. Now wear the garment; and you wear the garment by saying yes to Him. He says the same thing in Ephesians 4:22-note. And he is really on these folks. He says, "That in reference to your former manner of life [your former behavior, before you became a believer], you lay aside the old self." You know, he isn't contradicting himself. What he's saying is, quit living as if you have never been clothed with Christ. Here in our text Paul is referring to the clothing that took place when we were baptized into Christ. And that's a beautiful part here. Everything I need for life and for godliness, Peter says, I already have. He's given me the ability to partake of the divine nature.

You say, "Well, brother Wayne, I talked to a church during the last week and they didn't act like they were filled with the divine nature." That's exactly right and isn't that sad? Isn't it sad when people that are clothed with the very presence of Christ live as if that they're the pagan that is next door? You see, when you are walking in His garments, when you're clothed in His garments, the flesh has no way and no will whatsoever. It's the Spirit controlling our lives. But the very moment we choose to resurrect that old flesh it seems like it crawls off the altar every day, doesn't it? And when we choose to say yes to it, then it shuts the whole process down, even though we have been given everything that we need, everything in Christ.

Well, the word "clothed" here is the word **enduo**, which means to be dressed a certain way. When I got to military school the first thing they did was cut my hair off. Then they took my regular clothes, put them in a box and sent them home, and I was to wear a uniform every day. Why? Because we were identified with that school. And if you are going to be identified with that school, there's a certain garment that you have to wear. That's exactly what Paul is saying. Why is he? He's not talking about uniformity—we are all different—but he is talking about unity of the brethren when we live surrendered to Him. Why is it, you say? Well, we have Gal 5 to deal with, and he'll tell you why, how the flesh wars against the Spirit and the Spirit against the flesh. When everybody wears the same uniform they all have the same identity.

Now what's his point here in the passage? Jew and Gentile alike are dressed in the same garment. The person who has received Christ by faith, then he has put Christ on as a garment, His nature, His presence, His power, that all wraps themselves around and envelops them. Now, his point is that if you go back up under the law, you have just chosen to deny your total identity in the Lord Jesus Christ. What does it mean to go back up under the law? When I choose my flesh over choosing Him, I have just myself under some kind of law because I'm going to either measure up it or rebel against it. And what he's saying here is if you do that you have denied your identity. Your identity is in Christ. He adds in Gal 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus."

Now, his point here is not his point in other places. His point here is, when it comes to the privileges, when it comes to the power and the presence of God, everybody is equal when they come in and receive Him, the Lord Jesus Christ. This garment of Christ that's in us is our identity as believers. And when we say yes to Him, they see that garment on the outside. Race does not matter. It says in Gal 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek," which is interesting because a lot of people still want to keep those distinctions. Once you become a believer you lose them. Position in society doesn't matter. "There is neither slave nor free man." Gender does not matter. "There is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus." That's the common denominator. It doesn't matter where you go. You are one with other believers, and all of us are in the garments of the Lord Jesus Christ.

It is interesting to me, some people use the term fulfilled Gentile, or maybe, completed Jew. To me they are erroneous terms. Let me show you why. In 1 Corinthians 10:32 it says, "Give no offense, either to Jews or to Greeks [or Gentiles] or," he says, and he puts a third category, "the church of God." You see, we become one brand new creature when we come into Christ. We lose the distinction of being Gentile or Jew. That's what he's trying to say. We are now identified in Christ. We are not identified with race or sex or anything else. We are identified in Christ. Sons of God have a clear identity. And the purpose now that we have in this meantime living is to see Christians come to where they manifest that character in their life. We have a brand new garment we were given at [[salvation]].

Here is my question to you this morning: are you wearing that garment? Are you wearing that garment? When people hear you, when people are around you, do they see that garment? Are they affected by that garment? I believe all heaven rejoices when we start wearing the garment God has already given to us. A believer has an eternal destiny, but I want to make sure we understand something clear. We as a church have a clear identity. We have an eternal destiny, but we have a clear identity. And the key is, and the challenge is, wear the garment. Wear the garment. Wear the garment.

When I preached out of Ephesians I began to ask them that question: what garment are you wearing? (See message on Ephesians

4:20-24 by Wayne Barber) As a matter of fact, the next time somebody walks up to you and says something just a little bit different, ask them “What garment are you wearing?” Why can’t we get gut honest about this thing? We’re either wearing it or we are not wearing it. Oh yeah, we have it, but are we wearing it? When I was preaching out of Ephesians I had some parents come to me and say, “Would you quit preaching out of Ephesians?” I said why? They said, “We were coming to church today and we were arguing about something and our little children in the back leaned up and said ‘Momma, Daddy, what garment are you wearing?’” What garment are you wearing? Is your speech seasoned with grace so it edifies and lifts up your brother? Is your character walking in the garment of Jesus Christ? Or is it just another flesh game that many of us are playing until Jesus comes back, embracing a religion, but denying the power thereof?

Well, thirdly, the sons of God have an awesome relativity. You’re wondering where they came from. Whoa, hang on. We are more relative to history. We are more related to humanity than any person that lives on the face of this earth. You say, how do you know that? Well, I didn’t write this. Look at Gal 3:29: “And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s offspring. You are an heir according to promise.” The literal here is “If you are of Christ then you are seed of Abraham’s, heirs according to promise.”

Now being of Christ, we have become recipients of a promise that was given to Abraham 4,000 years ago. You think we don’t relate to history? The God of all history, we’re related to Him. We’re sons in His family. As a believer we have a significance in history. Isn’t it interesting how the world looks at us? I was watching a news program yesterday. And they were talking about this man who loves the camera and loves to be the center of attention. I have forgotten now who he was and what he was doing. But everything they had said was negative about him. But they said, by the way, this man is a born-again Christian.

And I thought to myself, does anybody on the news media even know what one is? And I will tell you why they don’t. Because we haven’t lived before them what they need to see. It’s not a problem with them, folks. It’s a problem with the fact that Christians are playing games with God. They’re not walking in the garment God has given to them. They don’t talk like they even know Christ. They don’t act like they even know Christ. But yet we’re related to all of history. We are tied into a promise of a covenant with Abraham.

But not only that, we’re related to all of humanity. You can go anywhere in this world and be related to somebody, no matter what race and what creed if they are a believer. Whether they are Asian, or whether they are whatever they are, we are related to them. Isn’t it awesome! Black, white, rich, poor, it doesn’t matter. If they receive Jesus we are all identified with the same uniform, Christ lives in us. We have a relativity to history that goes back 4,000 years to Abraham, and even before the foundations of the world, because He knew us before the foundations of this world. But we are also relative and related to humanity.

Back in Gal 3:13 we will see again the cost. It says, “Christ 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.” See, what Paul is doing, he’s contrasting grace and law and he’s trying to show you, yes, law has its purpose, but let me just show you what Christ does. He makes you a son of God. And you can’t be a son of God just because you are under the law. In fact, it doesn’t do anything but put you under a curse.

Let me ask you a question this morning. I wonder if you were here today and you joined the church years ago, but you have never bowed before the Lord Jesus and been dressed in the garment of the Lord Jesus Christ? I wonder if you have truly placed your faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. It is abandonment to Him. “Lord Jesus, I can’t save myself. Lord Jesus, I abandon myself to You.” That’s how you come in, that’s how you’re clothed. And that’s how you live every day of your life, every day of your life. Lord, I cannot. You never said I could. You can, You always said You would. Isn’t it great to be a son of God? Are we walking in the garment? Or do you even have it to wear? Where are you this morning?

Galatians 3:26-28, Galatians 5:19-21

What Garment Are You Wearing?



He’s contrasting what Christ does for us as opposed to what the law cannot do. The law is effective. The law had a purpose. It made us ready to receive the grace that only Christ could give to us.

Turn with me to Galatians 3. And we are going to camp out on some verses to make sure we understand what we looked at the last time together. We’re going to look very focused at Gal 3:26-28, even though we’ve looked at it once. I think we need to look at it twice because it begs a question we must answer this morning. What an amazing truth we saw the last that we were together in our study of Galatians: that at the moment of receiving Jesus Christ into our hearts, at that very moment, whether we feel it or whether

we don't feel it, at that very moment we become sons of God. Now, that's an exciting truth. No wonder we sing, "O come let us adore You," for what He has done for us is salvation. He says in Gal 3:26, "For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus." When we trust Christ for our salvation, at that moment we become, as he calls us, sons of God.

Now, what he's doing, he's contrasting what Christ does for us as opposed to what the law cannot do. The law is effective. The law had a purpose. It made us ready to receive the grace that only Christ could give to us. Paul uses a term for sons that's very unique, and we identified that the last time. There are four terms for a child or son, but he uses the term **huios**, that we looked at last time, a mature child, one who is a reflection of his father. It refers to one who lives in total harmony with his father. This is our position in Christ. If we are all honest, none of us have arrived at that point. But this is our position in Him.

It's the word that refers to Christ. That's who He is in us. He's the Son of God. He's always called **huios** of God, always. You will never see Him any other way in Scripture because He is the perfect Son. He is the Son of God from heaven that came to earth to become the Son of man. When we are surrendered to His will and when we are surrendered to His way, His Word, then we can enjoy the full privileges of adult sonship. You don't get to enjoy those unless you say yes to Him. The same way you are clothed in Him, as we will see in a moment, is the same way you walk in Him.

Now Paul shows us at the moment of salvation, not only do we become sons of God, but at that very moment we are baptized into Christ. We're not only immersed into Him, but we are identified with Him. We used the illustration of a bowl of red dye. You take a white cloth, put it into the dye. It is immersed into that dye. It is baptized into that dye. But it is also identified with the dye. Not only is the cloth in the dye, the dye is in the cloth. And Paul says in Gal 3:27, "For all of you who were baptized (**baptizo**) into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ." And that's a powerful statement he makes here. He connects being baptized into Christ with being clothed with Christ. This is a very vivid description of how we are now identified with His power, His presence, His character. We are saturated with it on the inside. Peter says we have everything that is necessary for life and for godliness.

And Paul is just rehearsing that truth right here in Galatians. We are totally identified with Him. It doesn't matter what race you are. He says in Gal 3:28, "There is neither Jew nor Greek." It doesn't matter whether you are rich or whether you are poor, whatever class in society you have. He says "There is neither slave nor free man." And it doesn't matter what gender you have. He says, "There is neither male nor female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus." The garment that He gives for us to wear affects a behavior that can never point to us; it can only point to Christ who lives in us. We all wear the same uniform. It doesn't matter if you are black or white or whatever you are, as far as your race, it doesn't matter. When you say yes to God it's all going to look the same, the character that flows from your life. Our behavior becomes His behavior as He lives His life through us.

Now this statement, this truth, begs to ask a question and to have it answered: If this is true, if we are clothed with His garment, if Christ lives in us, then why is it that so many believers worldwide live as if this truth isn't even there? I have learned from being in the pastorate those many years and being many places there are some people that are meaner than a snake and they call themselves believers. Now, somehow there's a problem here. How can you be clothed with Christ—and there is no such thing as a believer who is not fully clothed with Christ—how can we be clothed with the inward garment of Christ and our behavior be so different on the outside? How can some people treat other people as if they don't even know the Lord Jesus? How can people be so mean to one another in the body of Christ? How can this be?

All of us have been there. I've struggled. You've struggled. We've all struggled in our Christian walk. How is it that one day, Paul says in Romans 7, "the things I want to do I don't do. The things I wished I could say, I don't say." Where is this struggle coming from? What's wrong with us if we are clothed with the garment of Christ, that many times we choose not to walk in that garment?

Well, I want to spend some time today clarifying that one truth. We had a lot of questions that came up last week. You see, believers are dressed inwardly with Christ, inwardly. But for that garment to be seen outwardly—a garment is what you wear; a garment is your behavior—for that garment to be seen on the outside, then we must live by faith, trusting Him. Now, when you can see something, that's not faith. But faith is saying, "God, I trust You. I trust Your will and I trust Your Word." And when we are in that position of saying yes only to Him, then He takes our life and manifests His character, His behavior, through us.

This is why in Romans 13:14-note the apostle Paul says to believers who have already put on the garment, he says **'Put on (aorist imperative) the Lord Jesus Christ,'** and he tells them how, "by giving no provision (**pronoia**) to the flesh." This is what he says in Ephesians 4. He says "in regards to your former manner of life, put on the new man." (Eph 4:22-note; Eph 4:23-24-note) He's not refuting what was said in Colossians. You have already put Him on in salvation inwardly; now let Him be seen outwardly in your life by trusting Him. The same way we receive that garment is the same way we are dressed in that garment. That is why Colossians 2:6 says "As you therefore have received Christ Jesus, so walk you in Him."

Now, Paul has already told us in Galatians how he lives, how he allows God's life to live through him, how he allows God to be His garment, His character, His behavior. He has already told us how he does that. That is in Gal 2:20-note. You see, he's made a choice. In Gal 2:20 it says, "I have been crucified with Christ." At that moment he was made a son of God. He's clarifying that even

in Gal 3. At that moment he became baptized into Christ. At that moment he was clothed with Christ. “I have been crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me.”

Now look what he says, “And the life which I now live.” In other words, now, on the other side of the cross, I’ve got a choice to make. And he says I’ve made that choice: “I live by faith.” Faith comes from hearing; hearing from the word of God (Ro 10:17-note). **Faith** (**pistis**) is trusting God. “I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave Himself up for me.” (Gal 2:20-note) Faith is a choice. Every morning I get up I have a choice to make; you have a choice to make; Christians everywhere have a choice to make. That choice is this: either to say yes to God, lay down everything else and say yes to God, “God, I want to be a conduit. Will You just live Your life in and through me?” Or I have a choice to pamper my flesh. I have a choice to do what my flesh wants. I have a choice to yield to my flesh (**sarx**). We can choose that. If we do, we’re going to ruin our relationships. We are going to see this today.

What happens when you wear the wrong garment? Even though we are dressed inwardly with the garment of Christ, what happens when we don’t say yes to Christ? Why is it that we’re living such defeated lives from time to time? I’ve been there. Certainly you’ve been there. It’s because we just simply choose not to say yes to God. We’re not willing to trust God with what lies ahead in our lives. You say, “What does that wrong garment look like?” I don’t know how many people I’ve had say that to me, especially young people, they come and say, “I’m worried about this whole thing. If I’m clothed with Christ and I’m supposed to walk in the garment of Christ, what does my behavior look like when I’m not walking that way?”

Do you know one of the greatest ways to teach a truth is to show what it’s not, so that you can understand what it is? And so therefore I’m going to do something this morning, and I want to preempt Gal 5. We are going to see this in months to come. Who knows if I will live long enough to get to chapter 5. I’m kind of slow. Many of us will never make it to chapter 5, so I’m going to go ahead and do that this morning. And I think this will help us to see what the wrong garment looks like. It’s just so we can ask a question of ourselves, “What garment am I wearing?” By **garment** I mean my **behavior**. Does it reflect the One who lives within?

It’s so sad when we as believers—and I have done it—we as believers choose to pamper our flesh. We become immediately a detriment to the body of Christ. We become very divisive. It’s like a cancer in a physical body. It begins to eat away at the things that are seeking to be healthy. A person who seeks to go after that has no testimony at all. As a matter of fact, it completely disarms any testimony whatsoever, because people don’t see Christ anymore; they only see that individual.

I want to jump over, like I said, to Gal 5:19-21. And what Paul does here is, he gives the believers there a vivid picture of what happens when we choose to walk the other way. Why is it that we are clothed with Christ inwardly, but people don’t see that outwardly? What does it look like when we don’t let Jesus be Jesus in us? Paul shows that all the flesh can offer—and this is so good for us and healthy—all the flesh ever offers is a counterfeit at best to what God, in Christ Jesus has already given to us. We have a choice daily now whether to walk in one or the other.

Gal 5:19 says, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident.” That word “evident” means Paul says “I don’t even have to make this list, you already know what they are.” We have all been there. All of us have been there. He’s been there. He mentions that in Romans 7. He tells us in Philippians he hasn’t yet arrived (Php 3:12-note). He says, man, we all know what the flesh does. We all know this by experience. “The deeds of the flesh are evident.” And then he says, “Which are,” and then he mentions them, “immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmity, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, carousing and things like these, of which I forewarned you, just as I have forewarned, that those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God.”

Now, we need desperately to see what he’s talking about here in this passage. You say, “He’s talking about lost people.” Now, hang on to that thought. I will clarify that when we finish the message. What he’s saying is that the flesh is as wicked before we get saved as it is after we get saved. This may help answer some questions in your mind. Maybe you have come from other places, particularly from the south, and you have wondered how can churches be so divisive if they’re clothed with the body, with the garment of Christ? How can they treat each other this way? And he’s going to show you right here. You see, the flesh is never any different. Just like the characteristics of Christ are always the same when we say yes to Him, no matter what we are, Jew, Greek, or whatever. But the characteristics of the flesh are also always the same. They will never be any different. He didn’t even have to finish the list. He just gives a partial list to help us better understand.

Four things. First of all, we want to understand that all the flesh can do is offer us a counterfeit love-life. Now, I didn’t have any other way of putting this, because he deals here with the intimate physical relationships of people. He says, “Now the deeds of the flesh are evident.” He mentions three things. First of all is immorality, secondly impurity, and then thirdly, sensuality. Now, Paul describes a counterfeit love-life. What is called love is really lust, and he wants them to see it is a counterfeit to what God offers you and I.

It’s amazing how the flesh makes us think that lust is the same thing as love. The flesh makes us think that physical gratification for just an instant or a second is equal to the spiritual love that God will produce in us if we will just say yes to Him. Let me look at the words with you. First of all he mentions the word “immorality.” Actually, in this list the last word is the culprit, not the first one, but he

mentions immorality. It is the big word for sexual sin no matter what that sexual sin is. It is the word *porneia*. We get the word in English, pornography comes from that word. This is the big house. This is the house that all sexual sins live in. As a matter of fact, the King James adds to this and puts adultery. Well, it didn't really have to, because it is already covered with this word. Homosexuality, incest, promiscuous sex, adultery, all of these things are built into this word immorality. And so whenever you see it then you understand that it encompasses all sexual sin.

But then the next word is interesting because, you see, the Pharisees didn't commit those external sexual sins that immorality would cover, but they had other problems. They had unclean minds, and so the apostle Paul says to them, he says, "impurity." Remember when Jesus was with the Pharisees one day trying to show them that you can't conquer your flesh and He says, "You shall not commit adultery." And they said "Well, we aren't committing adultery." He says, "Well, wait a minute," He says, "if you have lusted after a woman you have already committed adultery in your heart." He was not condemning them, but what He was showing was the total inability for us to overcome this sin. That is why Jesus has to overcome us.

The word "impurity" is the word "**akatharsia**". "A" = without, *katharsia* is the word that refers to being clean, unclean (cf *katharos* = **pure**). A man told me once, he came to me and he just saddened my heart. He had been committing adultery for years, and finally God was dealing with him. And he came to me and, as he was trying to be restored in the body of Christ, he told me, "I'm sad to tell you," but he said "the place that I go to find somebody to sleep with is in the church." And he said, "The way I do it is this," he said, "I say something that is of a lewd type of slant to it, and I watch for the women that pick up on it, and I know immediately I have found my mark." He said, "In many churches it's just like a meat market and if you know what you are looking for you can find it."

Now, you see, this is what I'm talking about. You say, how can a church be that way? My friend, when you choose the flesh, when I choose the flesh, immorality is absolutely going to happen. And if it doesn't happen in the act, it will happen in the thought life. And it will be a person who tries to mask themselves and make everybody think they are spiritual, but on the inside their thoughts are unclean. And this is a sad thing. Everybody has been there at one time in their life. And it is a struggle that you have, but this is what Paul is trying to show. Do you want that counterfeit? Do you want that counterfeit, he says?

And then the third thing he says, which to me is the culprit of it all, and that's the word "**sensuality**." The word sensuality is the word **aselgeia**. It's the word that means without any restraint. It's license to do as you please. Many people think that grace is license. They really do. We're living in a day that casual Christianity has really killed us in this understanding. They think that because I am under grace I can go out and do anything I want. I can drink; I can do whatever I want to do. And that attitude is produced right here. This is where it starts. Whenever you think that grace is a license, I can do whatever I want to do, in the sense that there is no consequence to it, in the sense that it doesn't in any way offend my Father, that's where it starts, that license.

Grace never gives you the license to do as you please, never ever. It's the power to do as you should and that's where people miss it right there. That's the Antinomians of Romans. You see, you've got the legalist on one side, but you've got just as bad on the other side, the Antinomians. **Aselgeia**, this idea of sensuality, "I can do what I please at any time," begins to allow the mind to go the wrong way, and it will not be long until immorality will be produced in that life. You see, this is what Paul is trying to show them. Evidently it must be going on in Galatia, because they have bought into the fleshly mindset of religion, the performance mentality. Evidently some of them are falling right into this trap, and he has to remind them of this. All that flesh can ever do is to produce what we want, never what we need. And I want to say that again: all that the flesh can ever do is give you what you want, but never produce what we need. This is why people get into felt needs rather than real needs, the Word of God. God knows what we need. We don't have a clue. We don't even know what we want. So, a counterfeit love life.

But the second thing he mentions here is actually going to catch you by surprise, or it might not, but I think it will. And that second thing is a counterfeit worship. You're going to say, where in the world do you see that in that list? Oh, it's everywhere. It's incredible how many believers don't have a clue as to what worship is. I'm sad to say that. There are three words for worship in Scripture. One of the words means to fall prostrate before God because you don't want anybody to see you; there's nothing worthy about us to be seen. There's the word **latreia**, which means to serve. There is the word *seboma*, which means to live a lifestyle Monday through Saturday that everybody knows you are under the Lordship of Christ. You go into the store and you treat the lady who's behind the cash register, you treat her rudely; God stops you in the parking lot and makes you go back and ask that lady to forgive you because you are under the Lordship of Jesus. You're not free to express your emotions like everybody else. You're responsible to walk in the flow and the life of Christ.

The word for idolatry is the word "**eidololatreia**." I know that excites you, but it should. It comes from two words. You can see it in the word. **Eidolon** is the word for idol, an idol. **Latreia** means to serve, so, to serve an idol. That's what idolatry is, to serve it. *Latreia* is one of those words for worship, by the way. And, you see, the moment I start serving anything in my life other than Jesus, it becomes an idol and pulls me out of focus with my Lord.

We must begin with the fundamental understanding of what an idol is. An idol is anything that comes from man. It can be an agenda, it usually is. It always has an agenda with it. Habakkuk tells us it's made by human hands. So therefore, when you serve an

idol you are really serving, or I am really serving, my flesh. That's all it is. When I choose not to say yes to God, I'm serving myself because what I have come up with has nothing to do with what God wants in my life.

We sing a song written by Matt Redman ["The Heart of Worship"](#) I told you the history of that several months ago, but maybe you were not here that day. Matt Redman was in a church in England and they began to realize that what they were worshiping had become an idol. They were worshiping their style. They were worshiping their tastes. The preacher realized he was even worshiping his outline material. And so they laid everything down, and for 12 weeks they got on their face before God and said,

"God, we don't want to do another thing. We're not going to sing a song. We aren't going to preach a verse until You become the focus of our worship. We have gotten off track. Even though good things went on and our flesh certainly felt better, we have gotten off track."

Well, they went for 12 weeks or so and when they finally came back Matt Redman wrote that song. It has the same heart to it, the same depth to it, as some of the great hymns that we all love, and it says we're coming back to the heart of worship. And if you understood the words, he says we don't want a song anymore. It's not the music, Lord. It's You that's the focus of our worship.

Idolatry is very subtle. You can be idolatrous and not even know it. You can be very sincere and call whatever it is that you are into, we can call it worship. It can be a preacher. And I guarantee you, I have had to deal with this in my walk. It can be a staff member who idolizes his ministry and becomes very territorial and doesn't become a part of a ministerial team. It can be a congregation member. It can be anybody. An idol can be a style of music, and certainly we deal with that. It can be a ministry that you are attached to. An idol can be anything. It can be your family. It can be your house. It's whatever grabs your emotion. It's whatever draws you to it and that becomes your idol. Even though Christ's name might be in the midst of it, it is not worshiping Christ. It is worshiping something that the flesh has come to expect or to want.

Well, in the context of Galatians what was it? It was the law. They had substituted the law for the Lord. The law became their master instead of Jesus becoming their master; and as a result of it, this is why Paul has to bring up what he brought up. When we get off track, when we foolishly choose to obey the whims and the felt needs of our flesh we enter into what we call idolatry. And with that idolatry comes an agenda. And we have to defend our agenda. In worshiping of Christ we defend Him. But in worshiping anything else we have to defend our agenda, whatever that is. We are definitely worshiping, oh yes, but the wrong kind of worship. It is idolatry, to serve an idol.

Now Paul adds another word that clarifies this. And this so interesting to me; he adds the word "sorcery." You say, Wayne, that has nothing to do with worship. Oh, I beg your pardon. The word "sorcery" is the word **pharmakeia**. **Pharmakeia** is the word we get the word pharmacy from, but it also means drugs; it is the word for drugs. What I'm trying to show is that the flesh counterfeits worship to the point that it is like we are under a drug and we have to have it. Have you ever seen a person that's been on drugs and you try to take them off of it? And they get the shakes, and they get scared to death. "I've got to have it. I've got to have it. I've got to have it." And they actually have to go through a time of being deprogrammed so that they can understand what they need, not what they want. It's the same thing. That's how the term idolatry and sorcery comes together. It literally affects our behavior. It affects our talking to one another. It affects everything because we are defending an agenda that is other than Christ.

Idolatry is subtle. We can be of a certain age. We can be,... it does not matter. It does not matter if it's your preacher. It does not matter if it's you. Whatever agenda we attach ourselves to, that's what we are going to defend and we're going to defend it at the expense of worshiping the Lord Jesus. And it becomes like a fix. If we don't have it our way, whatever it is, then whatever it is it becomes an idolatrous thing in our life. I wish we could understand in all of us, at every age, at every position in life, whatever it is we are focused upon, whatever is taking our emotions, whatever comes out our mouth that we're defending, has everything to do with that which we are worshiping. And idolatry is any focus or agenda that is not Jesus Christ and trusting Him and Him alone.

I guess the question Paul would ask us all of us this morning is what are you addicted to? What is it, when it's taken away from you, you feel like you've got the shakes and you've got to go have it, other than the Lord Jesus Christ? You say, Wayne, that hasn't got anything to do with Galatians. You are using it. No, no! Didn't you hear in Galatians 3:1, "Oh, foolish Galatians, who has [what?] bewitched you." What's the word bewitched? Put you under their spell like a drug that is now influencing even your behavior. That's what Paul said. And that's where the false and counterfeit worship comes from. It's people that have something other than Christ in their focus.

Well, a counterfeit love life, a counterfeit worship, but really the next thing that he mentions, eight different things, to me are the most difficult and the hardest to swallow. It will affect a family; it will affect a church; it will affect whoever it is in the body of believers. The third area Paul brings up is counterfeit relationships. All believers want good relationships with others. I never wake up in the morning and want somebody to be mad at me. I want everybody to love me and I want to have good relationships with everybody. I want to have good relationships with my staff, with you, with my wife, with our children, my grandchildren, I want that. But when the flesh is obeyed, when we choose not to let that inner garment of Christ be manifest in our life instead of obeying God, then

relationships are not built; they are ruined.

Flesh cannot relate to anything or anyone at any time. The times that I have chosen to walk after my flesh, even when I was preaching, I would go home and my wife and I had no fellowship whatsoever. And God said, what's wrong here it is you, son. You have chosen to hang on to something. You've got an agenda somewhere in your flesh and it's ruining your relationship with your wife. How many times I couldn't preach because I had to go to my wife and ask her to forgive me? You see, that's where we all are. I want us to see what it looks like when you wear the wrong garment.

There are eight things that Paul mentions here in Galatians 5. It talks about ruined relationships. And each one builds on the other. The first one he mentions, well, let's just read the list, Gal 5:20-21. He says, "enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, and envying." Now, let's just look at this list as quickly as we can.

First of all is enmities. The word "**enmities**" is the word **echthra**. **Echthra** means hostilities. You say, Wayne, there are no hostilities in the body of Christ, certainly not. People are clothed with the garment of Jesus. Well, wake up and smell the roses. It's a hostile attitude. You see, when we're defending whatever agenda it is—it doesn't matter if it's the preacher, whoever it is or in the family, the father, it does not matter who it is—when we're defending the agenda that we worship and somebody isn't doing the agenda that we worship, hostilities begin to develop within the flesh. That's all the flesh can ever offer, a counterfeit relationship.

When we did a camp every year, we had rules. My goodness, we had rules. And we had people that came in that weren't used to rules. They had no rules. Camp, that is a time to have fun; what do you mean rules? We had a guy that worked with us, and he just did not understand grace. I understand that. But you know what happened? The people that came to camp that weren't used to rules reacted violently. They became hostile. Why? Because you have stepped on our little party; you have put accountability into this and we don't want it. That's hostility. Now they got very hostile that week.

Well, if you're hostile, the second word develops. It's the word "strife." Once hostility is present, then quarreling begins to follow. The word for "strife" is *eris*. It's the word that means contentious quarreling. Now, you and I can banter back and forth and we do on the staff all the time, and "What about this? Well, I don't think that." But it's fun. I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about contentious quarreling. In other words, it could be manifested in many ways.

I have noticed in the 21st century that rarely do people like to dialogue face to face. Their hostility and strife comes out in other ways. I wished we didn't live in such a technological age, cause e-mails are like drive-by shootings and letters are anonymous. I mean, this is the way people express their strife and their hostilities in the day in which we live. But it's nothing more than flesh. All of us have done it. We have all been there. You say, I don't know how to use a computer. Well, you figure it out some other way. All of us have done it. Listen to me, flesh, we are all in this boat together, and the key is what garment are we wearing? What garment is Wayne wearing? What garment is our staff wearing? What garment are you wearing?

The third he mentions here is jealousies. And I will tell you what will happen. When you see a believer in the midst of a difficult situation walking in the joy of the Lord you're very jealous of that. And see, flesh cannot stand a believer that walks in victory. And that word "**jealousy**" is **zelos**. It is to be uncomfortable with what you don't have that your brother does. And so therefore all of a sudden you see how the contentious arguing and the hostilities even are fueled when somebody else is walking in victory and you're not. And it's amazing how this forces us even further into the process.

And then the next one is really clear, **outbursts of anger**. And that's the word **thumos**. Now, **thumos** is cussing, screaming at someone. Have you ever been there? Have you ever had children? If you've been there, you maybe didn't cuss, but you wrote it down and signed it. I mean, you've had days when you understand what an outburst of anger is all about. There are two words for anger in the Greek language, and I think it would be helpful at this point to understand it. The word he uses here is the outbursts. But there is another word, *orge*. You see, there are a lot of people that get away with being angry because they have not blown up yet. They blow within, they don't blow out. And that's the word *orge*. It's building; it hasn't exploded yet, but it's building.

You are on a main street and the speed limit is 40 and there are two people in front of you are driving 21 and 22 miles an hour and they won't let you around them. It's building. It's building. That's **orge**. But when you started letting your horn do your talking for you—wouldn't you like to have the gift of interpretation when people blow their horn? —that's **thumos**. It has just exploded. I can stand it no longer. It's that hostility. Remember, this is all tied back to the agenda a person has to that which he is worshipping.

Then he uses the word "**disputes**." Now, the word disputes is even heavier. It's the word **eritheia**. It's a word for selfish ambition. It's a competitive word. You see, what happens now is you begin to realize somebody else has a different view than you have, and therefore you're going to dig in and, buddy, we're going to win. Come on over here. Come on over here. Flesh only can react that way. You see, and these disputes, they can't lose. They can't lose. It's like the church that said "We're going to by a chandelier," and somebody stood up and said, "We don't need it, nobody can play it anyway." You know, it's that constant hostility and disputes. Incredible!

This leads to dissensions. The word “dissension” is the word **dichostasia**. It means to stand apart from somebody. Now, this is really sad. This is when one person will not fellowship with the other person. They will turn and go the other way. If they come to church, instead of sitting there, they will sit on the other side. If there is a service they can go to that those people are not in, they will go to that service. They will not fellowship with these other people. Now, you see what false worship can take you to. I’ve been there. And, see, it’s the idea that we will not even enter the service if those people are there, no sir, no sir, no sir. So anyway, that’s what happens in a church.

Now look, watch this, factions. This is all to the Galatian believers, the church in southern Galatia. That is why I am relating it that way. The word “factions” is used. The word faction is the word **hairesis**. It’s the word we get the word “heresy” from. Look at this. They have divided themselves to the point that now they are identified by their difference. Now, you see, in Jesus He unites us. But when we have an agenda other than Christ, we will become identified by whatever agenda we tie into, and that’s a heresy. That’s a faction in a church. It is now divided.

See, this leads to envying. Now that word “envying,” it’s like jealousy, but not only am I uncomfortable with what my brother has, I’m going to do everything I can do in my power to rob him of what he has. And you know what normally it is? It’s his joy. We just can’t stand it when we see a brother walking in joy in the midst of whatever is going on. We can’t stand it. And a person who is jealous will eventually become envious and will do whatever it takes, whether it’s a statement, whether it’s an attitude, we will rob that person of his joy because we can’t stand the fact that we don’t have it ourselves.

Boy, it is not a pretty scene, is it? Everybody has been there. If you haven’t been there then my friend, hang on, you will get there, because we have not arrived. And when you choose the flesh these are the things that begin to develop. They will develop in a family. They will develop in a church. It’s so helpful and wonderful to look at Scripture and see flesh for what it is, but also see the contrasts of that in the Spirit of what God produces.

Finally, Paul adds pleasures, counterfeit pleasures. Do you realize that the flesh only offers counterfeit pleasure? I don’t even know why they call it pleasure, but the flesh sometimes interprets it that way. He mentions drunkenness and carousing. He doesn’t finish the list, and I will tell you why in a minute. Drunkenness is exactly what it says, **methe** is the word. It means to be under the influence of wine or strong drink. Isn’t it funny how people that say they live under grace, but yet have contentious lives with everybody around them, are also the people that will defend drinking before they will defend anything else?

By the way, you can always know a person by what he defends. Don’t ever forget that. You can always know a person by what he spends his time defending. And if he’s defending drinking, he’s got a problem with his flesh. Because the Scripture also says, do not be stumbling block to your brother. But in the book of Romans it is associated with acting improperly, no control whatsoever. All of us have seen the devastating results of drinking. We also see that in Ephesians. He talks about do not be drunk with wine.

And then Paul adds carousing. “**Carousing**” is the word that means partying. It is the word **komos**. Let’s just have a party. You see how the flesh is tied to every bit of this? Do whatever you do to make me feel better. Somehow you minister to my felt needs. I want to party. I want to party. Sadly enough, that’s the world’s way of thinking; that’s what pleasure is and that’s what has drifted right into the church. Both of these words are simply counterfeits of what the Spirit of God offers to us.

But he goes on. He gives them a warning, but this is important to understand it.

“Of which I forewarn you, just as I have forewarned you, that those who practice such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.”

You say, “Wait a minute. Everything that you’ve been talking about is a characteristic of a lost man.” Hang on, careful. There are two words, “those who practice these things.” “**Practice**” there is **prasso**. **Prasso** means as a habitual lifestyle. And I want to share with you, if this is your habitual lifestyle I would say to you, based on the authority of Scripture, you don’t know Jesus Christ.

However, there is another word *poieo*, and *poieo* means to fall into it from time to time. And that’s a believer right there. A believer can easily fall into the trap, but does not reside there. You see, there’s a difference. The Holy Spirit of God lives in him to convict him of a sin that is in his life.

Well, I’ve got to quit. This is so much fun to me, because every time I get up in the morning I look in the mirror and you know what I see? The biggest problem I’m going to have all day long. That’s the biggest problem I’m going to have. It’s not going to be the devil—the devil can’t be but at one place at one time—it’s going to be my flesh: whether I choose to walk after the flesh which means there’s going to be an agenda of a felt need; that’s my worship. That’s what I defend. Or I’m going to choose to just say “Lord, I can’t, You never said I could. You can, You always said You would. I want to walk in the garment You have already given to me. I want people to see the character of Jesus in my life.”

So my question this morning, and Paul’s question to the Galatians, would be: what garment are you wearing? Are you wearing the

wrong garment? Wouldn't it be great if somebody was to be contentious in this church and you could stop and say, excuse me, excuse me. I'm a little confused. What garment are you wearing?

The next time whatever comes out of your mouth is contentious or whatever—I don't care how it manifests itself; we have seen how it manifests—just ask yourself, what garment am I wearing? How stupid do I look in the presence of God with the wrong garment on? Hey, what garment are you wearing? What garment are you wearing?

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- [Go to Galatians 2 Commentary](#)