

Mon.
18
Feb.

Verse to Learn
Gentleness, self-control;
against such things there is no law.
Galatians 5:23



reading



Galatians 3:6-18 - Justification by Faith

Paul is trying to prove to the Galatians that justification, being made right with God, is by faith not by works. First, he uses the example of Abraham's justification. Abraham believes what God says and what God promises, and it is because of his faith in God that he is declared righteous. God tells Abraham that all the nations of the earth will be blessed in him. This is a prophecy of the Gentiles coming to faith in Christ, the seed of Abraham. It is through faith in the promise of God that Abraham is blessed, and it is only in the same way that others are also blessed.

Paul then shows that the law condemns us. God says everyone who doesn't keep his law perfectly is cursed - and who has ever kept it perfectly? In order to have eternal life by the law, we must have perfect, personal, and perpetual obedience, and for every failure we are cursed. But there is a way to escape this curse and be restored to God, and that is through faith in Christ. Christ takes the curse we deserve, and through faith in Him, we become the people of God.

Paul quotes from Habakkuk 2:4 which says, But the righteous shall live by his faith. It is only through faith that men become righteous, are accepted by God, enabled to lead obedient lives, and inherit eternal life.

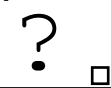
Finally Paul explains that the covenant God makes with Abraham isn't done away with by the giving of the law to Moses. God has made promises to Abraham and his seed, and because Christ is the seed of Abraham, these promises are always going to be in effect, and we can inherit them if we belong to Christ. What are these promises? That through Christ we can be made right with God, that He will be our God, and we will be His people. God doesn't say one thing and do another, so therefore, the law must have some other purpose.

1. How was Abraham saved?
2. Can we perfectly keep the law?

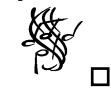
Ps. 81:1-10

1. Give thanks that God never changes.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Ian and Elizabeth Shaw.
4. Pray for family matters.

questions



praise



prayers



Sat.
23
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Galatians 4:17-18 - False Teachers

Paul is describing to the Galatians the character of those false teachers who have made it their business to draw the Galatians away from the Gospel. These false teachers are men who are looking out more for themselves than for anybody else. They pretend to show a lot of love to the Galatians, but they are not sincere. Their goal is to get the Galatians not to follow Christ but to follow them.

Sometimes people or ideas may seem very exciting and enthusiastic, but they are not true or sincere. False teachers often try to make people agree with them by being nice to them. But usually, no matter what they say, they really care more about themselves than about others.

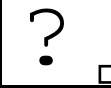
Paul gives the Galatians and us a good principle to apply in situations like this. He says that it is good to be made much of, it's good to be zealous for a good thing. It's alright, it's good to be excited and enthusiastic about something good. But if you're excited and enthusiastic about something bad - the result is disastrous. And on the flip side - you should make much of something that is good. You should be zealous, excited, enthusiastic for what is good, for the truth. This zeal should be constant and steady, not here today and gone tomorrow, and present even when your leaders aren't around. This is part of what it means to be a whole-hearted Christian.

1. How does Paul describe the false teachers?
2. What is wrong with being zealous for a bad thing?
3. What kind of zeal should we have?

Ps. 84:1-6

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow; that sinners would be converted and Christians grow in their faith.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Hayley Adamson.
4. Pray for family matters.

questions



praise



prayers



Fri.
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Galatians 4:12-16 - From Friends to Enemies

Paul tells the Galatians of the love they used to have for him. He calls them his brothers and wants them to lay aside any resentment they might have. He tells them that he has no quarrel with them. He has spoken strongly about what they have done, not because he is personally offended, but because he must defend the truth of the Gospel, and he is genuinely concerned about their welfare. If we ever need to reprove people, we need to be sure that it is not done out of a personal resentment, but out of concern for the glory of God and the good of the other person.

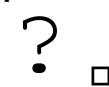
Paul reminds the Galatians of the difficulty under which he worked when he first came among them. We don't know what Paul's bodily ailment is, but whatever it is, it doesn't bother the Galatians. They don't despise or reject Paul for it, but they receive him as a messenger of Christ. Notice how quickly and strongly these Galatians have changed in their opinion of Paul. This should remind us to seek acceptance from God not from men, because men change like the weather.

Paul then goes on to say, "What happened? Why have they changed towards Paul? They once were happy in receiving the Gospel, why have they turned from that? Paul, who once was their favourite, has now become their enemy. Is it because he told them the truth? Often when we are just faithfully telling the truth of salvation, we can make enemies. But that shouldn't stop us. Again, we need to find our approval in God not in other people. If we really care for others, like Paul cares for these Galatians, we must speak the truth in love to them."

notes

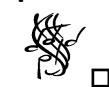


questions



1. What happened when Paul was with the Galatians?
2. How have they changed?
3. What happens sometimes when we speak the truth of the Gospel?

praise



Ps. 83:9-18

prayers



1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Rosemary Tait.
4. Pray for family matters.

Tue.
19
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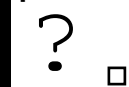
Galatians 3:19-29 - The Purpose of the Law

Paul goes on to teach the Galatians the purpose of the law. First, the law is given to convince us that we're sinners and to show us what God thinks of our sin. The law is also to restrain us, to keep us from being as sinful as we possibly can be, and at the same time it is designed to point us to the only way whereby our sin can be paid for and forgiven - the death and sacrifice of Christ. Even though the law is still in use to convince men of sin and restrain them, its purpose in pointing us to Christ is fulfilled because Christ has come. The law is given to different people in different ways than the covenant with Abraham and therefore is for a different purpose.

The law is given to convince men that they need a Saviour. Instead of being opposed to faith, it's meant to point people to faith. The law shows us our deadly wounds, but it can't cure them. Paul uses a word that the ESV translates "guardian", but it can also be translated "schoolmaster". The law teaches the people of God how sinful they are, how God sees that sin, and how incapable they are of being obedient. The law teaches them to offer sacrifices, which in themselves can not take away sin, but point to Christ and His sacrifice. Now Christ has come, and we do not need the law in that way to direct us to Christ.

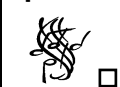
Paul closes his arguments by telling us the privilege we have in Christ. We are the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus. We are not servants but sons and daughters of God. Baptism is the sign and seal of admission into the church just like circumcision was for the Jews. In our baptism we state that we are followers of Christ and will serve Him faithfully. This privilege of being children of God and by baptism devoted to Christ is enjoyed by all real Christians. The old divisions are gone, and we are one in Christ Jesus and are children of Abraham.

questions



1. What is the purpose of the law?
2. What privileges do we have in Christ?

praise



Ps. 81:11-16

prayers



1. Give thanks for the privilege of being a child of God.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Bob Smith.
4. Pray for family matters.

Wed.
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Galatians 4:1-7 - Not Slaves But Sons

The Old Testament church is like an under-age child, under teachers and managers who educate him about things, but he doesn't quite see things clearly. The teacher is the law, and they are taught by the ceremonies of the law to look to Christ, though they don't fully understand what that means.

But now that Christ has come, the child has grown up. Christ, who is truly God, for our sakes becomes man and takes on the form of a servant to redeem those under the law. Christ agrees to suffer and die for us, that He might redeem us from the wrath of God, and from the curse of the law, which we, as sinners, are under. We are now no longer treated as servants or children, but as sons, grown up to maturity, who are allowed greater freedoms and privileges than when they are under teachers.

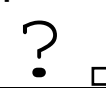
Because God has adopted us, He has given us His Holy Spirit that enables us to pray to God as our Father. Upon believing in Christ, we become the sons of God, are accepted and adopted by Him, and being the sons of God, are entitled to the heavenly inheritance.

From these verses we see the amazing love and mercy of God the Father toward us in sending His Son into the world to redeem and save us, of God the Son in coming so low and suffering so much for us, and in God the Holy Spirit in agreeing to live within the hearts of believers. We who are by nature children of wrath and disobedience have become by grace children of love.

notes

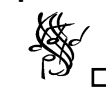


questions



1. What was the Old Testament church like?
2. How should believers view God?
3. What do these verses teach us about God?

praise



Ps. 82:all

prayers



1. Give thanks for God's love and mercy towards us.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Christine, Jamie, and Eva White.
4. Pray for family matters.

Thur.
21
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Galatians 4:8-11 - A Great Change

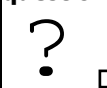
Paul reminds the Galatians what they were before the Gospel was preached to them. They were ignorant of the true God, the way He was to be worshiped, and they were slaves to their idols. Those who do not belong to God always have some sort of idol in their life - something that they put in God's place, and this is always wrong, because only the true God is to be worshiped.

Paul tells the Galatians to remember the happy change that has come upon them through the preaching of the Gospel. Now, by the grace of God, they know the true God and His Son Jesus Christ and have been delivered from their ignorance and slavery. All our acquaintance with God begins with Him; we know Him because we are known by Him.

The Galatians are unreasonable and foolish to go back into slavery. Paul is surprised that they who know the light of the Gospel are turning to the darkness of keeping the law to be saved. The law has no power to cleanse the soul and give lasting satisfaction like the Gospel does. The Galatians aren't even Jews, they don't have the past ties to the law. It doesn't make sense for them to start keeping these ceremonies. It is possible for Christians to be drawn into great sins, like these Galatians, and the more mercy God has shown to any, the worse it is when they turn from Him.

Paul is concerned that his work amongst them has been in vain. He has spent a lot of time teaching them the Gospel, but now they seem to be giving it up, and this is always a cause of great sadness to faithful ministers.

questions



1. How were the Galatians living in the past?
2. What do they know now?
3. Why is Paul concerned?

praise



Ps. 83:1-8

prayers



1. Pray for our minister, that he would be encouraged in his work.
2. Pray from one of the prayer points in In The Pew.
3. Give thanks for Paula Jackson.
4. Pray for family matters.