

Galatians 3:1-14

The Spirit Triumphs Over The Law

Good morning Church... It is a Joy to be gathered with you in the House of the Lord today.

Currently on Sunday morning, we are in the Book of Galatians.

This is an incredible letter, and it has been a great study so far.

Today will be no different. This is vital portion of scripture as far as our faith is concerned.

Paul will detail the Power of the Spirit and the work of the Spirit over the Power of the Law and the works of dead religion.

If you are able please turn in your Bible's to Galatians Chapter 3.

We will be in the first 14 verses of the Chapter 3...

Let's read the whole portion, and then we will come back through and break it apart verse-by-verse.

Justification by Faith

(cf. Rom 4)

3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? 2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the

hearing of faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? 4 Have you suffered so many things in vain — if indeed it was in vain?

5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? — 6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

The Law Brings a Curse

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them." 13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ

Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Let's pray...

Now, please remember that the main thrust of this letter from Paul to the different Churches in Galatia was to warn and teach the believers there to not be deceived by those who were coming to them preaching the Jewish Religion being necessary for blessing or even continued salvation.

This really has been a plague on the Church since the very beginning; that we can somehow be saved by Christ's sacrifice on the Cross, by His Grace, our lives are then blessed to live the Abundant life given to us through Christ, having all this, then trying to come back under a works based religion to get further blessings from God.

It is an insult to the work of the Cross... and Paul said last time to be saved by Grace, then to come back under the Law is one of the highest sins.

And we need to be cautious today to fall into these false teaching out there that if we follow after the teachings of Judaism that our standing with God will be improved somehow.

Remember the Jewish Prophet Isaiah said, **Isa 64:6**

And all our righteousnesses are like filthy rags;

The overarching theme of this letter to the Galatians so far is the answer to the question, “How can we who are sinful by nature, come to God who is Holy by Nature?”

And it has to be by Grace through Faith... Jesus plus anything is false religion.

Our sin has completely separated us from the Lord, and it is only by His Grace that we can be seen Justified and Righteous.

Jesus took our sin upon Himself on that Cross, and in the greatest transaction ever recorded, He gives those who would receive it His Righteousness...

Our own righteousness is filthy rags, His Righteousness are garments of salvation.

This is the simple message that we cling to, and we cannot be tempted as the Galatians were to add the Law or Religion to it...

The Judaizers were ripping off the early Churches, as they were jealous of their Freedom that is found in Christ.

Of course, the scriptures give us today an abundant warning against these types of false doctrines coming about in the Last Days... so we can expect them...

1 Tim 4:1-5 Now the Spirit expressly says that in latter times some will depart from the faith, giving heed to deceiving spirits and doctrines of demons, 2 speaking

lies in hypocrisy, having their own conscience seared with a hot iron, 3 forbidding to marry, and commanding to abstain from foods which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and know the truth. 4 For every creature of God is good, and nothing is to be refused if it is received with thanksgiving; 5 for it is sanctified by the word of God and prayer.

This is why we hold the Word of God so high in this ministry, it has to be our standard, our guide as we maneuver through the great deceptions of our day.

They are still among us today and we have to be vigilant against them.

It is the simple Gospel Message that God entrusted to us, His Church, not a religion of “Dos” and “Don’ts.”

Our blessings come from God on the basis of who He is, not because we are jumping through religious hurdles to please Him.

This works based religion has always complicated the simple work of the Gospel and the Power of the Holy Spirit with its bewitching draw.

Look again at verse 1 now...

Justification by Faith

(cf. Rom 4)

3:1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes

Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified?

I really like how the Amplified Bible puts this verse...

Gal 3:1 O YOU poor and silly and thoughtless and unreflecting and senseless Galatians! Who has fascinated or bewitched or cast a spell over you, unto whom — right before your very eyes — Jesus Christ (the Messiah) was openly and graphically set forth and portrayed as crucified? AMP

We see here the seriousness of what Paul is writing here, as his concern for these young influenced Christians becomes obvious through his writings here.

When he says “Foolish Galatians,” he is literally meaning, that they are not exercising their minds, and they are acting unintelligent.

Paul had spent a great deal of time with them teaching them about the plan of salvation being by Grace through Faith alone.

They knew enough for themselves to be accountable to the information that was given to them.

They were not using common sense here, they allowed their minds to drift from the Truth and were becoming ignorant regarding the True Faith.

They should have known better, they should have remembered that Faith in Jesus and believing in the Crucifixion was enough for salvation.

However, as often happened in Paul's day, and in our day too, the Judaizers came in and bewitched them... which is another very strong word here used by Paul. Bewitched means to fascinate, to cast a spell, to lead astray by evil deeds, or hypnotized...

These Galatians were mesmerized with all that the Judaizers were teaching them.

And as we have mentioned, there is this natural draw within us to be drawn into legalism, because if I can do more religion than you are doing, God will bless me more...

And Paul asks them, "Who has bewitched you?" As Paul is asking them to do a fruit inspection here...

Who are these people, look at their lives, their ministries, who are they really?

Really, look, can you say that someone who follows the Law is more blessed than those who receive blessings by Grace... Paul knows that they will answer this question and they will see clearly the truth.

Church, understand something this morning, there is a constant satanic attack against us and what we are doing here.

The real reason for errors within the Church, is the Devil himself...

Jesus said to the religious who challenged His ministry, **John 8:44 You are of your father the devil, and the**

desires of your father you want to do. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he speaks a lie, he speaks from his own resources, for he is a liar and the father of it.

And the Devil is good at what he does... he uses seemingly trustworthy people, good people even to slip in a little false doctrine and a little here and a little more there to lead people astray.

Pastor Josh told me this week, he feels that one of his main jobs as a pastor is bringing people back to the simple truths of God's Word... As he is finding it is a constant battle, that entails endless reasoning and sometimes huge disappointment and others times great victories.

This is what Paul is doing here, with the Galatians, who were deceived by these Judaizers and their message, they were fascinated with it and seemingly spellbound by it all.

This really should serve as a warning to us this morning, because there are so many modern messages out there today that have this same draw to it.

Someone sent me a video this week about one pastor preaching a message about there being too many beards in the Church, as many as out there in the world.

And his message was simply ridiculous if you decipher it through God's Word, it was legalistic, but I found it interesting, the guy was actually a really good preacher.

And although he did not have any scripture that he was using, I found that he was very convincing in his presentation...

He was emotional in his appeal and he was able to appeal to the listeners emotions, and as I am listening to his non-sense... I found myself wondering if I should shave my beard off...

Of course, one chat with my wife and the man's false doctrine was exposed... The woman you sleep with likes your beard, so unless you want to sleep on the couch you will keep your beard.

But all this too say, is these false preachers can say anything, and they usually use the Holy Spirit as an excuse who gave them these extra-biblical messages.

In fact most false teachers blames the Holy Spirit for their false doctrine.

But as Pastor Josh mentioned, many are being swept away by these false messages today, because the internet has given them an avenue to spread their lies and confusion further than ever.

This same bewitching source of Satan's deception is still at work in the Church today... He is the father of lies.

Now, Paul warns the Galatians with this admonition “before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified.”

This confuses some people because the Galatians were not present at the crucifixion of Jesus Christ.

Now, while that is the case, Paul’s preaching of Christ Crucified was so clear and vivid to them, that he captured their imaginations and they knew the truth of it all.

Kenneth Wuest says here, “The word crucified is in the perfect tense. This speaks of the fact that the apostle is not speaking of the figure of a dead Christ on a crucifix, but of the risen, ascended Christ who had been crucified, who was alive, whose glorified body still bore the marks of the nails and the scars of the crown of thorns, and who is the living Saviour by virtue of His atoning work on the Cross.”¹

And Paul reminds them of what they believed when they heard the Gospel for the first time, that the complete work of Jesus Christ was accomplished on the Cross, and salvation was once and for all now available to all sinners who would believe.

Paul continues on here in verse 2 now...

¹ Galatians in the Greek New Testament for the English Reader by Kenneth S. Wuest, 1962

2 This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Paul here, as he often does uses a rhetorical question to bring to remembrance their first love with the Lord, how it all began.

They did nothing but only put their simple faith in Jesus Christ... and that alone allowed them to receive the Holy Spirit and in addition to this they received New Life in Him.

It is through Faith alone that the work of the Spirit takes place in our lives.

Listen to what Paul tells the Ephesian Church...

Eph. 1:13-14 In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, 14 who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.

And Paul there presents salvation in its totality.

First, we hear the Gospel Message, then we respond and receive the Message.

The Galatians heard Paul preach and in turn received Jesus as their Savior.

Then, God met them in their faith and gave them the Promised Holy Spirit as a guarantee of their salvation.

The Spirit's work took place in them because of faith, and not of works...

And this sets up one of the most profound verses of this letter...

Verse 3 of Galatians 3 now...

3 Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

Paul asks again, "Are you so foolish?" To believe this false doctrine after considering these things?

The Galatians knew how they began, it was in the Spirit... how could they think that they could perfect the work of the Spirit by works of the Flesh?

This is the downfall of many today, Grace is just too simple, it cannot be that easy, there has to be something we can do to further impress God and garner further blessing from Him.

Church, do you know that God blesses us regardless of what we do for Him...

He has blessing in store for your life, apart from your striving and apart from your efforts, you just have to receive them by faith.

Trying to work to earn God's Blessing, is like being in an airplane flapping your arms, convincing yourself that you are keeping the aircraft in the air.

When all along it is the airplane keeping you in the air, not our meaningless and silly arm flapping.

The Blessings that come to us in this life are often underserved.

First and foremost our salvation, having this promise of eternal life, it is only attained by faith, it's all God's doing.

And something tends to happen in us when after we receive God's Grace, it is in our nature to want to then improve upon God's Spirit.

You see, Great Moves of God, all of them were Spirit led and driven.

No Revival was birthed out of committee meetings, and Revivals often made the committees very uncomfortable, because God would work outside of the limits man puts upon Him.

The reality is, often there are those who sit in committee meetings who just seem to oppose anything knew that the Lord might do.

And this is the story throughout Church History... The Spirit will move, things will begin in the Spirit, it will be thrilling and the Church even has trouble keeping up with the Holy Spirit in many ways.

But something always happens over time, since the Apostles even to today, the Spirit will move, then man will meddle, and ultimately programs and committees start up, and the ministry becomes this well-oiled humanistic machine.

I just watched a movie that will be coming out in theaters soon about the Jesus Revolution and the things that took place in the early days of Calvary Chapel.

Chuck Smith had the band Love Song play at the Church after only meeting them once...

One guy was out on a work release program for a Drug Charge...

I am not sure something like that would fly today... We are too polished today... too sophisticated in our religion, to take a chance that the Spirit will move outside of our manmade parameters.

We already get enough complaints when the young people in our own Church have a worship night.

Because this movement is today in interesting place, as we have developed our own styles and systems that we are comfortable with.

Having begun in the Spirit, are we to improve it by works of the flesh? Absolutely Not, God Forbid...

The believers in Galatia were bewitched into thinking that their good works and adherence to the Law were making them more prone to receive more blessing from the Lord.

They were exerting the flesh trying to outdo the work that the Spirit had begun.

Paul explained it like this to the Romans...

Romans 9:30-32 What shall we say then? That Gentiles, who did not pursue righteousness, have attained to righteousness, even the righteousness of faith; 31 but Israel, pursuing the law of righteousness, has not attained to the law of righteousness. 32 Why? Because they did not seek it by faith, but as it were, by the works of the law. For they stumbled at that stumbling stone.

Oh foolish Galatians... but again we have to be careful to judge them too harshly, may we hear this as a warning to Check our own lives...

Have we experienced the transforming supernatural life changing work of the Spirit, and perhaps today we find ourselves trying to improve upon it in our own efforts?

Too many are swept away in this deception too easily... Look what Paul says now in verse 4...

4 Have you suffered so many things in vain — if indeed it was in vain?

You see, the Galatians received the Grace of God, even as great opposition came against their lives for this choice.

It was a two front battle for them, the Law-Promoting Jews, and Roman idolaters both came against the Church in Galatia.

These new believers paid a steep price to embrace the Grace of God, and to find true salvation...

And what was it all for, if now they were falling under the pressure of legalism.

Their initial sacrifice and commitment would all be in vain.

Paul is wondering here, how they could have had such a wonderful spiritual experience and commitment in the beginning, and just throw it all away?

Paul marveled because they had received all the gifts of the Spirit, and now it would be of no lasting value if they were resorting to the arm of the flesh, and coming back to the Law...

This is the end result and the trap of legalism... It kills the Work of the Spirit in the Church.

We must not reject Faith in order to capitulate to the Work of the Flesh.

Let's move on to verse 5 now...

5 Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? —

Paul here clarifies that God is the One who supplies the Spirit to His Church, and He alone is responsible for the miracles and that take place in our midst and the lives changed.

This is a very important point to take in this morning.

Because our human nature tends to start believing that if I do better, make better choices, endeavor to be a better person, than God will owe us something special.

But as we have discussed over and over again we cannot clean ourselves up enough ever...

Try this instead... Simply Believe that God wants to move here in Calvary Chapel Victorville.

Why, because we are anything special? Because we have attained some high level of achievement, because we are more religious than those slackers at the Church down the street?

No, none of that, God will pour out His Spirit, because He promised to do it.

And when God moves in a group of people like those of us gathered here today, we can never stand up and say "Look what I did."

No way, we only get to marvel and rejoice in the fact that God is working here in spite of us, and who were are.

And it is to God be the Glory, and it is that simple.

If we could point to our achievements... "Well, God is blessing us, because we follow the dietary Laws of the Old Testament, and we observe the Feasts... and we don't eat those unclean bats... This is why He is pouring out His blessing."

Well, when we are looking at things that way, we have to be honest, because the reality is, and we will always break the Law more than we can obey it, no matter who we are...

It is so important that we never forget that it is God who supplies the Spirit here, and any work that takes place in the ministry and in our individual lives is all to His Glory...

It is by faith Church, think of the all the blessings we miss, because we think we are not worthy of them... or we have to perform some ritual to be blessed.

Of course we are not worthy, that is why it is called Grace...

Let's continue in verse 6...

6 just as Abraham "believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness." 7 Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "In you all the nations shall be blessed." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham.

Paul now reassures the reader here that it is their faith that brought them into this relationship with the Lord.

These Judaizers were pushing circumcision, and no doubt were using Abraham as their proof text, for

which Paul then takes them to before Abraham was even circumcised himself which is in Genesis 17...

Paul takes them to Genesis 15...

Gen 15:4-6 And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying, "This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir." 5 Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." 6 And he believed in the Lord, and He accounted it to him for righteousness.

You see Abraham is not only the Jew's father, but he is really the father of all who come to God through Faith. Abraham sets this ultimate example of faith, as we see here in these verses, that God was the Object of his faith.

Abraham was in a place where he was helpless to do anything in himself, all he could do was believe, and that is not a bad place to be.

The results of Abraham's faith was righteousness... apart from anything that he did himself.

And Paul makes it clear here that this promise went beyond the Jews, to all the nations through Abraham.

And those who are of the faith are sons and daughters of Abraham and included in this wonderful promise.

Emphasis being though faith, not through religious ceremony or works.

So, we will end this morning with verses 10-14...

The Law Brings a Curse

10 For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "the just shall live by faith." 12 Yet the law is not of faith, but "the man who does them shall live by them."

13 Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"), 14 that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

And as Paul has done already, he reiterates here that if you choose the path of the Law, to toe the line of the Law, you cannot pick and choose which part of the Law you want to obey, it is an all or nothing kind of thing.

Only two paths in scripture that can lead to salvation, the first being perfection according to the Law, and the second, by Grace through Faith.

Jesus took the penalty and the curse of the Law on Himself.

The Law states... Deut. 21:22-23 "If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, 23 his body shall not remain overnight on the tree, but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance; for he who is hanged is accursed of God."

And when Jesus allowed Himself to be hung on that cross for you and for me, He did it with the understanding that because His Body being cursed that day, it would ultimately open up this New Era of Grace.

And in this New Era of Grace, the Just shall live by faith... and the Promise given to Abraham is now offered through Faith to all of mankind.

Remember 2 Cor. 5:21 For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

And this is the emphasis of all that Paul is trying to say here to the Galatians, and to us this morning.

God worked out our Redemption, it is not in our religious exercises that we are Redeemed, we only need to receive it by faith... Believe Church, that is it...

It is the Grace of God that comes into our lives, and revolutionizes our lives, allows us to experience the New Life promised to us.

2 Cor. 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.

And if you have put your faith in Jesus Christ this morning already, understand as we begun in the Spirit we must continue in the Spirit.

Phil 1:6 being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;

Having begun in the Spirit, He will be faithful to complete what He has started in us, individually and as a Church.

Look, this Church should have closed down years ago, some of you have told me how you used to wonder if you would show up here, and the doors would be closed and this place shut down like the many other Churches in this neighborhood.

But God heard your desperate prayers, and by His Grace He has brought life to this place again...

Not because we read our Bibles more than other people, not because we are more religious than other people, not because we did some special ceremony to get His attention.

It was solely by His Grace...

And we need to ask ourselves this morning, why would God bring life to this Church, that in all human reasoning should have been closed down?

Why has God brought you here to join in this work, what purpose do we all have in what He is doing here? Surely, He did not call us here to be spectators, He brought you here by His Spirit for a reason.

And what I love about it all, something that me and the staff marvel about often, is we are nothing special, we are not what the world would deem as important...

But that is what makes what God is doing here so important...

Everything that takes place here at Calvary Chapel Victorville here in the near future will be all to His Glory.

None of us will be able to take credit for the lives that He will touch through the ministry here, in spite of us, and all because of His Spirit, will we witness this move of God.

We have to be careful to not get in His way Church, and meddling with our human efforts, we must simply believe that He is and will continue to work among us...

Heb. 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Church, we can never forget that it is all for Him and by Him that lasting ministry will take place here.

Understand, God wants to use your life to reach the lost in this world, He will use your life, and the reach will be great... I hope you believe this Church.

Having begun in the Spirit, let's keep on keeping on with the Spirit...

In order to do this we cannot forget who we are...

Listen to Paul's words to the Corinthian believers...

1 Cor. 1:26-31 For you see your calling, brethren, that not many wise according to the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called. 27 But God has chosen the foolish things of the world to put to shame the wise, and God has chosen the weak things of the world to put to shame the things which are mighty; 28 and the base things of the world and the things which are despised God has chosen, and the things which are not, to bring to nothing the things that are, 29 that no flesh should glory in His presence. 30 But of Him you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God — and righteousness and sanctification and redemption — 31 that, as it is written, "He who glories, let him glory in the Lord."

That's us Church...

If we glory, we will glory in the Lord...

Now, maybe you are here, and you are not a Christian, I believe too that God has you here this morning for a reason.

He brought you here to make a decision... to Choose His Son Jesus Christ, to believe upon His sacrifice upon that Cross was enough for you to find salvation.

Believe today... Today is the Day of your Salvation...

And the moment you believe you become a part of the family here...

These people will be your people, we will love you imperfectly, but we will love you.

There are no religious rites, no membership cards, no religious hoops to jump through, no signing of any documents, Just believe upon Jesus as your Savior, and you are a Brother or Sister at that point...

If that is you, during this last song... Make you way to the front where the prayer team will be, they desire to pray with you the prayer of salvation...

The prayer team is here for anyone who needs prayer this morning, whether it be a Prodigal Child that needs to come home, a lost husband, or a healing, whatever you need prayer for this morning, make your way up here, and allow the prayer team to minister to you...

Maybe you have been caught up in a streak of legalism, come up, repent and get back on the right track, the one that is led by His Grace.

Let’s pray...