

GALATIANS – Lesson 13

3:23-29 - “The Coming Of Faith”

February 2, 2014
Craig Crawshaw

REVIEW

THE PROMISE (3:15-18)

- 1. GIVEN TO ABRAHAM AND HIS DESCENDANTS**
LAND, MULTIPLE FAMILY, BLESSING THROUGH THE “SEED”
- 2. SUPERIOR TO THE LAW**
EARLIER, UNCONDITIONAL, ONE-SIDED, EVERLASTING
- 3. THE PREDECESSOR OF OUR FAITH**

THE LAW (3:19-22)

- 1. GIVEN THROUGH MOSES**
 - a. TO SHOW US OUR SIN
 - b. TO SHOW US GOD’S PERFECT STANDARD
 - c. TO POINT US TO CHRIST
- 2. INFERIOR TO THE PROMISE**
LATER, CONDITIONAL, TWO-SIDED, TEMPORARY
- 3. FULFILLED IN JESUS** (the promised “seed”)

FAITH (Galatians 3:23:29)

23 *But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.*

24 *Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.*

25 *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.*

26 *For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.*

27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.*

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.*

29 *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.*

v. 23-25 contrast FAITH to the LAW

v. 26-29 give glorious blessings of FAITH

V. 23-25

- 1. The Law is linked to repentance – FAITH is linked to belief**

✓ The forerunner of Jesus was John (the baptizer). John's message was "repent, for the kingdom of God is at hand." To obey the Law and "repent" of sin was all the Jews knew, in order to be right with God.

✓ When Jesus (faith) came His new message was "repent and believe"

Mark 1:14-15 *Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, and saying "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; repent and believe in the gospel."*

✓ Note the link Jesus' message had with both the Law and the Promise:

- a. "repent" is linked to the Law
- b. "believe" is linked to the Promise

2. The Law's mercy was temporary – FAITH's mercy is continual

Did the Law have mercy? – yes. There was a "mercy seat"; a place where sacrifice could be made to "atone" for sin (atone = cover). This "mercy seat" is essentially associated with all the ceremonial laws, and Jesus is the fulfillment of them all.

Now Jesus is our "mercy seat."

Hebrews 4: 16 *Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.*

3. The Law condemns – FAITH (in Jesus) saves

John 3:17 *For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.*

Example: If my face is dirty, I see that in a mirror. But the mirror cannot clean my face, it can only show me the filth. Likewise, the Law cannot cleanse my sin, it can only reveal my sin. I need something (Someone) outside the Law to cleanse my sin (Jesus). The mirror and the Law condemns; the wash clothe and the Savior Jesus cleanses.

*There is a fountain filled with blood, drawn from Emmanuel's veins;
And sinners plunged beneath that flood lose all their guilty stains.*

William Cowper

4. The Law was never meant to teach - FAITH IN JESUS is our "teacher"

Tutor = schoolmaster = "paidagogos" (Greek)

A "paidagogos" was a slave in a Roman household who raised a child until such time as he led him to a teacher who could instruct him properly. "paida" is a young child.

"agogos" means "to lead." So, a paidagogos (tutor) was one who raised a young child to lead him to the one who could finally properly instruct. The Law was our "paidagogos" and Jesus is our teacher = the Word of truth.

5. The Law was conditional – FAITH (like the Promise) is unconditional

Exodus 19:5 *Now then, if you will indeed obey My voice and keep My covenant, then you shall be My own possession among all the peoples, for all the earth is Mine.*

Note: a. "Ifthen" - conditional

b. obedience brings blessing

6. The Law trusts in what can be seen; FAITH trusts in the unseen

What can be “seen” is tangible, temporary blessings

What is “unseen” is an everlasting salvation relationship with the Almighty

Hebrews 11:1 (NASB) *Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen.*

(NIV) *Now faith is confidence in what we hope for and assurance about what we do not see.*

(KJV) *Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.*

Thus, Biblical faith produces

ASSURANCE, CONVICTION, CONFIDENCE in & EVIDENCE for
something of SUBSTANCE (a never-ending God-relationship)

7. The Law is based on rules – FAITH is based on RESURRECTION

As the writer of Hebrews continues in chapter 11, he chronicles the results of FAITH.

v. 3 FAITH of the men of old gained the approval of God

v. 4 FAITH of Abel obtained a righteous testimony

v. 5 FAITH of Enoch was pleasing to God

v. 7 FAITH of Noah brought heirship of righteousness

v. 8ff FAITH of Abraham brought the inheritance of God

The section on Abraham continues through v. 19 where we find the climax of his faith. *This teaches was Abraham was thinking.*

Hebrews 11:17, 19 *By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises was offering up his only begotten son. He considered that God is able to raise people even from the dead, from which he also received him back as a type.*

The ultimate faith is believing in resurrection from the dead. Paul teaches this is Romans 10:9 (to which I so often refer).

Romans 10:9 *If you confess with the mouth Jesus as Lord, and believe in your heart that God raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.*

This is the faith that links OUR FAITH to ABRAHAM’S FAITH ! - the link between PROMISE & FAITH.

SUMMARY THUS FAR

1. Law – repentance

Faith – belief

2. Law – temporary mercy

Faith – continual mercy

3. Law – condemns

Faith – saves

4. Law – holds in bondage

Faith – teaches to be free

5. Law – conditional

Faith – unconditional

6. Law – trusts in the seen

Faith – trusts in the unseen

7. Law - based on rules

Faith – based on resurrection

V. 26-29 The glorious BLESSINGS of FAITH

1. (v. 26) Sons of God

This is not speaking of the universal fatherhood of God, nor of the universal brotherhood of mankind. These are liberal and false doctrines. Yes, all mankind are made in the image of God, bearing many of his characteristics. But it is only those of faith that can rightly be called God's children.

1 John 3:1 *See how great a love the Father has bestowed on us, that we would be called children of God...*

John 1:12 *But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, even to those who believe in His name.*

Some might want to change "sons" of God to "children of God" as does the 2011 New International Version. But to do so is to miss the revolutionary meaning. In most ancient cultures it was the sons, not the daughters, who received the inheritance. So "sons" here refers to "legal heir" as well as familial bond. We are ALL heirs – men and women alike. In a similar way men are part of the "bride of Christ." If we don't let Paul call Christian women "sons of God" we miss how wonderful and radical a claim this is! And it's all by FAITH in Jesus.

2. (v. 27) Clothed with Christ

This is one of Paul's favorite metaphors of the Christian faith experience. It has at least four wonderful meanings.

- a. **Our primary identity is in Christ.** Clothing tells people what kind of person we are, and often identifies classes by uniform. To say we are clothed in Christ is to say that our identity is not found in classifications, but in Christ. We are CHRISTIANS above everything else.
- b. **We have close relation to Christ.** Clothing is worn close to our person, closer than any other possession. So to say that we are clothed in Christ is to indicate that we are closer to Jesus than any other person or thing.
- c. **We are to imitate Christ's nature.** To say that we are "clothed in Christ" is to say that we have taken on His very character, striving to emulate Him in every action.
- d. **We are acceptable to God.** To say that we are clothed in Jesus is to say that we are seen by God as Christ-like. Our sins are gone and Christ's righteousness prevails. God sees us through the lens of Jesus, as we are His accepted sons.

3. (v. 28) One with Christ

There can be no greater intimacy or closeness with another than to be "one" with them. Note the 3 primary social barriers that are broken by faith in Christ:

- a. The cultural barrier ("neither Jew nor Greek")
- b. The class barrier ("neither slave nor free")

c. The gender barrier ('neither male nor female')

We are all made to be equal children in God's family through FAITH.

4. (v. 29) Heirs of promise Each of these final four verses of Galatians 3 stretches our appreciation of the relationship God has given us through FAITH. This verse both looks back, and looks forward. It looks back to our link with the faith of Abraham, being heirs of the promise through Jesus Christ, the "seed." In this way it summarizes what Paul has been saying in verses 15-29. And it looks forward to what Paul will teach us in chapter 4 about being "sons" by promise, as he will go into greater detail on this marvelous truth.

CLOSING THOUGHTS

Non-gospel based religion is characterized by

1. Bondage ("shut up under sin"; a tutor to lead us)
2. Impersonal relationship with the divine motivated by a desire for rewards and fear of punishment
3. Anxiety about one's standing with God

Gospel -based FAITH is characterized by:

1. Freedom
2. A personal relationship motivated by love for God
3. Security and assurance

John Stott on Law and Faith:

"After God gave the promise to Abraham, He gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The law exposed sin, provoked sin, condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man's respectability and disclose what he is really underneath – sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself.

And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft-pedal sin and judgment . . . We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history . . . No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth."

The Message of Galatians, pgs. 92-93.