

Justified by Faith

Galatians 3.1-9 ~ March 27, 2011

Introduction to Text and Topic

- Paul appears to be starting over here ~ *Why?*
 - **ch1** - He first defends his apostleship (by sharing his experience)
 - **ch2** - He then defends the gospel (in Jerusalem and Antioch)
 - **ch3** - Now he points them to their salvation experience
 - He points them to Scripture ~ as the Judaizers may have done
- Starting over from a fresh angle reinvigorates him
 - He's upset all over again ~ and still very shocked by their actions
 - "*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?*" ~ emotion **bursts** out

v1b ~ "not obey the truth"

- **v1 - obey** ~ Note it's not their beliefs he attacks but their behavior
 - Error can come in via the heart or the mind ~ manifested in actions
 - **Read Phil 4.6-7** "*the peace of God guards us*"
 - **Read James 1.12-18** "*drawn away . . . of His own will*"
 - *What are we drawn away from?* ~ God's side
 - **III:** Friday a man tried to entice a child into a white van
- But first, "*What about Paul calling them foolish?*"

Jesus on calling people fools

- Jesus said "*Whoever says, 'You fool!' shall be in danger of hell fire.*" **Mt 5.22**
 - *Is calling people foolish, calling them fools?* ~ Maybe not . . .
- But Paul refers to people as fools in **Rom 1.22**
 - "*professing to be wise they became fools*" ~ But did he **call** them fools?
- Let's let Paul off on a technicality
- *Does the warning still stand?* ~ *Is calling someone a fool unforgiveable?*
- Let me show you something . . . **Read Mt 23.17-19**
 - Jesus called the scribes and Pharisees fools ~ so it's not even a sin
 - *How can we resolve this?* ~ Look at the context ~ **Read Mt 5.21-22**
 - This is about the human heart ~ about hate . . .
- **III:** "*A Table in the Presence*" ~ soldier dresses up like a woman
 - **Read Dt 22.5** ~ "*nor shall a man put on a woman's garment*"

Xition: But there's another puzzle here ~ "before whose eyes"

v1c ~ “before whose eyes”

- *How can this be? ~ How could the Galatians have seen Christ?*
 - Paul isn't referring to eyesight ~ read “*portray*” as painted
- The image here is of a wall mural ~ a larger than life portrayal of Christ
 - III: St. Girardeau along the Mississippi ~ “Tales” 20ft tall
 - III: Wall mural downtown going north on 13th Street
- Paul's preaching was this powerful and effective ~ Paul knew this . . .
- Chrysostom said this, “*He does not say, ‘was crucified’, but ‘was painted crucified,’ showing that by the eyes of faith they beheld more distinctly than some who were present and saw the crucifixion.*”
 - III: Watching a movie after reading a book ~ reading uses imagination

v2 and v5 ~ “works of law” or “hearing of faith”

- Paul asks a rhetorical question
- Many of them hadn't even known of the law before hearing the gospel
- Many Galatians were Gentiles (they'd never been under law)
- *How could the law have saved them?*

v3 ~ Again with the “foolishness” . . .

- *How can the law help you be more saved?*
 - The law only enslaves you and steals away your freedom in Christ
 - The law is not evil . . .
- But law-keeping as a means to earn God's favor is evil . . .
 1. It drains you of joy
 2. It makes you unbearable to others
 3. It makes life a contest in which you try to one-up each other
- But God is not impressed with you ~ He's not impressed with me
 - We fall so far short of impressing God it's silly to imagine **(2 Cor 10.12)**

v4 ~ “Have you suffered so many things in vain?”

- *What were the “many things” they suffered?*
- *What exactly does suffer mean?*
 - It could mean only “*experience*” ~ but *why the negative connotation?*
 - Apostles were persecuted ~ but local believers probably were too
 - **Acts 13.45** ~ “*Jews were filled with envy . . . they opposed*”
 - **Acts 14.22** ~ “*through many tribulations enter the kingdom of God*”

Xition: Now to verse 5 ~ contrasting law and faith as reasons for miracles

v5 ~ “He who . . . supplies the Spirit – works miracles”

- 2nd use of phrase “by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith”
 - Both are activities of man ~ but active vs. passive activities
 - You received the Spirit by the hearing of faith . . .
 - He worked miracles among you by the hearing of faith . . .
- Law-keeping had long since failed ~ God had been silent for 400 years
 - **Mk 6.1-6** ~ **v5** ~ “He could do no mighty work there..”
 - **Mt 13.58** ~ “He did not do .. works there because of their unbelief”
 - Jesus was omnipotent ~ He could do whatever He wanted
 - He chose not to ~ He predicated miracles on hearing faith
 - *Does God hear your faith? ~ Or does He hear silence?*

Read vs 5 to 6 ~ Faith Precedes the Blessing

- Salvation came to the Galatians prior to works being a twinkle in their eye
 - Just as it had for Abraham
 - Their experience and Abraham’s experience is the same ~ Faith Saves!
 - Our experience and Abraham’s experience is the same ~ Faith Saves!
- And this is not a mechanical transaction ~ like a gumball machine
 - No ~ This is God granting us the gift of faith
 - Then imputing Christ’s righteousness to us based on that gift
 - This all has to do with being accepted ~ He gives us ears to hear . . .

v7 ~ Only the Faithful are sons of Abraham

- First affirmations (v6 “it was credited”) and now denials (v7 “only those”)
 - Last week in **2.15-16** we covered these – here they are again
- Faith has always been the trait possessed by a true child of Abraham (v7)
 - “for whatever is not from faith is sin” **Rom 14.23**
- Genetic and ancestral relations were always unrelated to true salvation

v8 ~ Abraham was a Gentile unbeliever when God came to him

- **Read Genesis 12.1-3**
- The Jews refused to see the truth of **Gen 12.3**
 - “all” the families of the earth would be blessed
 - Only 3 verses into the history of the Jews the truth is plain
 - But it gets lost in the many details of what came after
- ///: Switches on IFF box ~ squawk identification or not

Xition: Order of events in life of Abraham

Order of important events in life of Abraham

- **Gen 12.1** ~ God chooses Abraham
- **Gen 12.2** ~ God promises to make Abraham great
- **Gen 12.3** ~ God promises to bless all the world through Abraham
- **Gen 15.6a** ~ Abraham believes the promises of God
- **Gen 15.6b** ~ God credits this faith as righteousness
- **Gen 17.10** ~ Circumcision given as sign of the covenant

Only after salvation came to Abraham was circumcision enacted

- Righteousness is imputed to Abraham (age < 85) through faith in **Gen 15.6**
 - Circumcision is instituted in **Gen 17.10**
- Note the covenantal nature of salvation
 - Abraham (at 99) is circumcised long after God made him righteous
 - But the next year his son Isaac is circumcised at 8 days
 - Circumcision / and now baptism are not directly linked to salvation
- This is why Paul pushes past Moses – further into Jewish history
 - The practice of circumcision became very strict after Moses
 - But even Moses didn't practice circumcision of Abraham (**Ex 4.24-26**)
- The Galatians must be shown that righteousness is by faith ~ not law
- God saved Abraham through faith
 - not circumcision ~ not family or ethnic privilege
 - not law keeping ~ not works of righteousness

v9 ~ Abraham ~ the father of us all

- The modern faithful are blessed just as Abraham was blessed
 - And those prior to Abraham (*e.g., Melchizedek*) are saved the same way
 - All the way from Adam, Eve, Abel and Seth . . .
- Paul in **Rom 4.16** writes, *“Therefore it is of faith that it might be according to grace, so that the promise might be sure to all the seed, not only to those who are of the law, but also to those who are of the faith of Abraham, who is the father of us all...”*
- John Calvin made this comment ~ *“There is no variety of roads to righteousness, and so Abraham is called ‘the father of all them that believe,’ because he is a pattern adapted to all, nay, in his person has been laid down to us the universal rule for obtaining righteousness.”*

Let's Pray