

## "The Blessing of Abraham" Galatians 3:1-14

There exist just two fundamental ways we can live out our lives on earth - confident in ourselves, or confident in Christ. This is true of justification (the beginning our relationship with God), and it is equally true of sanctification (the ongoing process of transformation into the image of Christ). Which pathway will you choose?

Two irreconcilable ways to live life – works of law, or self v. life of faith

You cannot know the power of Christ's work while still clinging to your own strength.

Law, or self, will continually try to undermine the life of faith.

### **I. Confident in self – 3:1-5**

#### A. "Bewitched fools"

("as with the 'evil eye'" BAGD; "by means of spells" LS; "cast a magic spell..." RR); believe the lie

Fool: not a statement regarding intellect; Luke 24:25

Definition of a fool – truth is staring him in the face and he chooses a lie;

Satan's tactics; lie; that we should retreat from the cross. That we don't need the cross. That we can make it on our own. Cross humbles us.

#### B. Ashamed of the cross

Publicly portrayed; "write up in public"; public pronouncement in which the validity of a particular fact is proclaimed; validated; official notification; placard; opposite of a magic spell (done in the open and true)

Christ suffered publicly; Paul suffered ridicule for proclaiming the cross 1 Cor. 1:23; Embarrassing: "Your god was crucified?!"

- Avoid persecution – Acts 13-14
- Boast in flesh – Gal. 6:13-14

Rom. 1:16-17; If I'm ashamed of Christ, I can't experience His power

Gal. 3:2-3

3 Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? (NIV)

Law (3:2) = flesh (3:3) or self

Paul not concerned with going line by line through the Law to determine what applies and what does not. He is addressing a fundamental approach to God and life.

JUSTIFICATION

SANCTIFICATION

"God creates out of nothing. Therefore, until a man is nothing, God can make nothing out of him." Martin Luther, "Martin Luther--The Early Years," Christian History, no. 34.

## II. Confident in Christ – 3:6-9

"take Abraham for example"

Long history of Jewish teaching that Abraham earned righteousness through his works.

"In rabbinic writings, Abraham is often affectionately called 'a bag of myrrh,' for 'just as myrrh is the most excellent of spices, so Abraham was the chief of all righteous men.'" (*Cant. Rab.* 1.13; cited in Longenecker, 110)

How? His deeds. "For Abraham was perfect in all his deeds with the Lord, and well-pleasing in righteousness all the days of his life." Jub. 23.10.

"Was not Abraham found faithful in temptation, and it was reckoned unto him for righteousness." 1 Macc 2:52

Paul: faith alone. The essence of the blessing promise and gospel

Define faith

Illustrate – sitting on chair; you tell me the chair can hold me; I examine the chair. I trust you, the messenger; I believe the evidence; I place my fate in the chair. I have become convinced.

What matters is not the quantity or quality of my faith, but the object of my faith. Faith does not save me. The object of my faith saves me.

Not faith in faith, but faith in God

Rom. 4:18-22; What He has promised He is able to perform

Heb. 11:1; "Faith is the assurance of things hoped for..."

Not apart from, or contrary to, evidence. Faith is not "proof."

C.S. Lewis – like faith in the sun; by it I see everything.

### ***Why do I trust Christ? 4 Reasons***

#### **A. Earned our righteousness – 3:8-9**

Meeting a standard; declared righteous

#### **B. Removed the curse of law – Gal. 3:10-13**

Dt. 27:11-14, 26; 28:58-68

Israel agreed to stipulations of the Law

Sacrificial system dealt with covenant failure. Problem: atonement only covered over sin. Rom. 3:25b

Needed curse removal

Num. 21:4-9. Foreshadowing of curse removal; serpent in wilderness. Transfer consequences onto this object that reminds you of your guilt.

John 3:14-15; Just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness

Contradictory systems; Gal. 3:11-12; Hab. 2:4; Just by faith will live

Gal. 3:13 – curse transfer

#### **C. Gives us His promised Spirit – 3:14**

John 7:37-39

Could not be received until curse removed; temporary indwelling; Ps. 51

Acts 2:32-33 "promise"

**D. Perfects us through faith – 3:2-5 (note progression)**

"Perfected" = brought to maturity. James 2.

Faith is both event/moment and process/lifestyle

Resources – 3:5

supply – 2 Cor. 9:10; lavishly outfitted; "to defray the expense of providing a 'chorus' at the public feast"; present tense implies ongoing supply

Eph. 1:3 (blessed with every spiritual blessing in the heavenlies)

2 Peter 1:3-4 (seeing that His divine power)

Why? Through trials which mature us – 3:4

Acts 13-14; When they first trusted Christ, they probably were persecuted

Missing the point of sanctifying trials; they teach dependence

James 1

First instinct – get out of the trial; associate with Judaism

**Application**

Choose a path:

Confidence in self

Confidence in Christ