

My Favorite Thing About GALATIANS

Galatians 3:26-28

November 27, 2021

We are moving quickly through the New Testament and today we find ourselves in the book of **GALATIANS**.

This letter, written in approximately **49 AD**, is believed to be Paul's first.

The early church found itself in a fierce battle over the nature of salvation. According to the **Judaizers**, faith in Jesus *alone*, as the basis of salvation, was not good enough for Gentiles and they were putting pressure on the Gentile believers to seek salvation through circumcision and law keeping – even though they had already accepted, by faith, the Salvation that is found in Jesus.

At the heart of the **Judaizers** assertions was the **belief** that they, as Jews, were inherently better because of their **"Chosen People"** status, and would, therefore, always be better than the Gentile believers. The **Judaizers** were hijacking the Truth as it is found in Jesus and the new Gentile believers were buying it!!

There is a line from a movie that comes to my mind, **"The bad stuff is easier to believe."** That is the reality the Galatian converts found themselves in. They **believed** they were 2nd class citizens. They **believed** they weren't quite good enough. They **believed** the lie because it fit within what they already **believed** about themselves. So, just like any bullied person who is desperate to fit in, they decided jumping through hoops was less painful than being considered **"outsiders"**.

What the Galatians didn't fully realize was that no matter how many hoops they jumped through, they would always be considered 2nd class by the **Judaizers** and that, perhaps more importantly, trading Righteousness by Faith for law keeping was going to return them to a life of spiritual slavery.

Which brings us to **My Favorite Thing About GALATIANS – Equality in Christ**.

Paul was nearly apoplectic!!!!

- **Galatians 1:6-7** - I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel --⁷ which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ.

Paul has been fighting this particular conflict for a very long time. He gave 2 examples:

- At one point Titus, a Greek believer, accompanied Paul to Jerusalem. Because Titus was Greek, he was not circumcised, which created a problem because, according to Paul, **"some false brothers had infiltrated our ranks to spy on the freedom we have in Christ Jesus and to make us slaves."** **"But"**, he said, **"We did not give in to them even for a moment, so that you might remain in the Gospel truth."**
- **Galatians 2:11-21** - When Peter came to Antioch, I opposed him to his face, because he was clearly in the wrong. ¹² Before certain men came from James, he used to eat with the Gentiles. But when they arrived, he began to draw back and separate himself from the Gentiles because he was afraid of those who belonged to the circumcision group. ¹³ The other Jews joined him in his hypocrisy, so that by their hypocrisy even Barnabas was led astray. ¹⁴ When I saw that they were not acting in line with the truth of the gospel, I said to Peter in front of them all, "You are a Jew, yet you live like a Gentile and not like a Jew. How is it, then, that you force Gentiles to follow Jewish customs?" ¹⁵ "We who are Jews by birth and not 'Gentile sinners' ¹⁶ know that a man is not justified by observing the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by observing the law, because by observing the law no one will be justified. ¹⁷ "If, while we seek to be justified in Christ, it becomes evident that we ourselves are sinners, does that mean that Christ promotes sin? Absolutely not! ¹⁸ If I rebuild what I destroyed, I prove that I am a lawbreaker. ¹⁹ For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹ I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing!"

Had Paul caved to the pressure and insisted that Titus be circumcised or had let Peter's hypocrisy pass, he would have lost all credibility with those he was converting through belief in Jesus and Righteousness by Faith. Paul lived what he preached: Righteousness comes by Faith in Jesus. Period. Full stop. Nationality has nothing to do with it. Religion has nothing to do with it. Law has nothing to do with it.

Paul then asked a series of questions:

- Who has bewitched you?

- Did you receive the Holy Spirit by observing the law or because you **believed**?
- Are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort?
- Have you suffered so much for nothing?
- Does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you because you obey the law or because you **believe** what you heard?

BECAUSE

Remember Abraham? He **BELIEVED** God and it was credited to him as righteousness. Those who **BELIEVE** are children of Abraham, because the goal of the Gospel given to Abraham was the Justification of Gentiles by Faith - "**All nations will be blessed through you.**" {Genesis 12:3}

- **Isaiah 42:6-7** - I, the LORD, have called you in righteousness; I will take hold of your hand. I will keep you and will make you to be a covenant for the people and a light for the **Gentiles**,⁷ to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from prison and to release from the dungeon those who sit in darkness.
- **Isaiah 49:6** - he says: "It is too small a thing for you to be my servant to restore the tribes of Jacob and bring back those of Israel I have kept. I will also make you a light for the **Gentiles**, that you may bring my salvation to the ends of the earth."

You are the recipients of this promised blessing, just like Abraham was.

- **Galatians 3:11** - Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, "**The righteous will live by faith.**" {Habakkuk 2:4}

The Law, was given 430 years after the Covenant, but it doesn't do away with the Covenant....

Basically put, God initiated the Covenant relationship with Abraham, a 75-year-old childless man, and He promised him 3 things:

- Your descendants will possess this land {Genesis 12:7}
- Your descendants will be as numerous as the stars of heaven / sands of the sea {Genesis 15:5; 22:17}.
- Through your SEED {Jesus} all the nations of the earth will be blessed {Genesis 12:3; 22:18}.

And what did Abraham do? He **believed** and it was credited to him as righteousness. {**Genesis 15:5**}

The law simply makes us aware of sin because it shows us what holiness looks like and was given to function like a guardrail on a mountain road – it keeps us from going over the cliff.

If law could give life, then it would be possible to become righteous by keeping the law. If the promised inheritance depends on law keeping, then it no longer depends on what God promised.

You can't have it both ways – either you depend on God's promises as the means of salvation or you depend on law keeping as the means of salvation.

The Bible tells us that the entire world is a prisoner to sin:

- **Psalms 14:1-3** - The fool says in his heart, "There is no God." They are corrupt, their deeds are vile; there is no one who does good. ² The LORD looks down from heaven on the sons of men to see if there are any who understand, any who seek God. ³ All have turned aside, they have together become corrupt; there is no one who does good, not even one.
- **Romans 3:23** - for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,

The promised inheritance is fulfilled then, not by law keeping, but by faith in Jesus.... **TO ALL WHO BELIEVE:**

- **Mark 1:15** - "The time has come," he said. "The kingdom of God is near. Repent and **believe** the good news!"
- **John 3:16** - For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever **believes** in him shall not perish but have eternal life.
- **John 5:24** - I tell you the truth, whoever hears my word and **believes** him who sent me has eternal life and will not be condemned; he has crossed over from death to life.
- **Acts 16:29-31** - The jailer called for lights, rushed in and fell trembling before Paul and Silas. ³⁰ He then brought them out and asked, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" ³¹ They replied, "**Believe** in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved -- you and your household."

THEREFORE

Galatians 3:26-29 - 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, slave nor free, male nor

female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

God's love for this little rebellious planet is so great that He sent Jesus to save it. All who **BELIEVE** are adopted and move from a position of rebel to a position of son. We **ALL** become Children of God, regardless of gender, skin color, cultural or financial background, education, language, country of origin or any other artificial distinction society can dream up..... There is no national hierarchy, male headship, or manifest destiny at the foot of the cross. All have sinned. All need a Savior. All who **BELIEVE** receive Salvation. We are **ALL** brothers and sisters - held together by the blood of Jesus.

That's why **Equality in Christ** is **My Favorite Thing About GALATIANS**.