



Sunday, June 12, 2022

Sunday: Pastor John VanderWindt

Sermon: The Spirit Helps Us Live Our Faith

Scripture: Galatians 3:1-4:7

Good morning.

I'm going to do a little switch around on stage here a minute and set up a couple of things. I brought the prayer hands here to kind of separate our stage and also to remind us that all of this comes through prayer.

I want to thank Isaac and Paul for helping to set up the rest of this, this morning. So I sent an email this week and I said, "Hey, Mike, any chance we can have one screen show one thing and another screen show the other thing?" We've got our new system here. It's really great. But we haven't figured that one out yet. So if we do get that point, we'll use it. But today, we're going back old school. The old flip charts. We've seen them before. Maybe some of you haven't seen them before.

So on the flip charts, I've got two words. One is "Sanctify." And one is "Justify."

Justify

Sanctify

Today as we look at Galatians 3 all the way through the first seven verses of Galatians 4, we are going to be looking at two significant words in the Christian faith. Paul in Galatians spends a lot of time talking about being justified by faith. So we're going to look at the aspect of, "What does it mean to be justified?"

Justification is basically a two step process. One is as we talked about earlier in the year, the aspect of God forgiving our sins and making us clean. The second aspect of justification is where God puts on us the righteousness of Christ. God says, "When I see you, I see my Son. Holy and pure and righteous." That's justification. Sanctification also has two pieces to it. Just like justification is the forgiveness of sins, sanctification is the putting off or putting to death our sinful past or our sinful deeds. We all know that that is a daily process.

We don't ever get to a point where we say, "Oh, taken care of that. I never have to worry about lying again." I think we just lied in that statement itself. We know that that's a daily process. So in justification, that's a one time process when Jesus died on the cross. Jesus forgave us of our sins. Now in sanctification, we're trying to put off and work on not being sinful. The second part is where God says, "You are now righteous. I put on you the righteousness of Christ."

The second part of sanctification is God saying, "I give you the Holy Spirit and the Holy Spirit dwells in you to remind you of my love for you and to help you put to death the sinful nature." So in both of these situations, God is at work. And what we'll see today is that in Galatians 3, Paul says, "People from Galatia, you have a problem." And I think it's a problem which we all have to realize we sometimes struggle with ourselves as well.

As I was studying this week, it was just a great reminder of the gift of grace that God gave. So what I would like to do today is I'd like to go through the passage and rather than read the entire thing and then backtrack, we're going to take it section by section because we'll see how the process keeps coming down until this place where we understand we are God's children and loved by the Father. Join me in prayer.

Dear Lord, as we come today to look at your Word, we pray that Your word may speak loudly to us of your grace. Lord, we pray that within our own hearts, we may understand the love that you have for us. And Lord, how we in our daily lives can reflect that and have the freedom to live as your children. Lord, I pray that the words that may be spoken may be yours and yours alone, in Jesus' name, Amen.

So for this first portion of it, I want you to think that the stage is divided into two pieces. There are two sides to this. When we talk about justification, we usually talk about belief. We believe that we are justified by faith.

Justify
Belief

Sanctify

When we talk about sanctification, we often get caught up in this part. Works.

Justify
Belief

Sanctify
Works

We often think that it is us who need to do something in order to make sure that we are still sanctified. That makes sense, right? I know I sin, so I need to do something to stop sinning. So we rely on our work in that. And this is what Paul addresses in Galatians 3. Please join me in chapter three. We're going to read through the first little bit, and then we'll talk about a few things in it.

Galatians 3:1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. **2** I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? **3** Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? **4** Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? **5** So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

So here Paul is saying that same thing. We know that we are justified by our faith and we know that because we believe it happened and we've heard it in Scripture and from other people. Jesus died for us. And we believe that. Now, if we also believe that we are to be sanctified, Paul is saying, "So, in this aspect of sanctification and in this aspect of becoming more Christ-like, do you believe that because of all the great things you do? Or do you believe it because God said it's true?"

So Paul is saying, "You can't start here in belief, and then go, "Okay, I believe this part from God, but this part over here, I have to do myself. I have to make sure that I am sanctified. I need to make sure that I check off the boxes, hence the pencil. That I walk around with a pencil each day and go, "Okay, what do I need to do for God? Yep, did that, did that, did that... we're all set."

God says, "No, no, that's not the way it works. You need to just believe it and go from there." The problem is, as Paul says twice in those first parts where he calls them foolish, oftentimes we get fooled into thinking something else. We get fooled into thinking that we have to do it ourselves. Paul says, "Don't go there. Think about what it is." Then he says, "Let me give you an example." And in verse six, he says, **6** So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

So if you look down the bottom you see that that's from Genesis 15. And in Genesis chapter 15, God said to Abraham, "Abraham, I am going to make you a great nation. And I am going to give you descendants far more than the stars in the sky or the sand on the seashore." And then God says, "And I'm going to promise it to you." And they made a covenant and in that covenant, what they did was they took animals, they opened them up in half. And the covenant basis is this... that when you walk through that place in between the two animals, it is saying, "If I break my promise, may this be done to me."

That's a serious promise. Abraham didn't walk through. God did. And God says, "I promise you I will make you great... and your nation." And then it goes on in verse seven, "7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. 8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." And God told Abraham that three times that nations would be blessed through him.

And then he says, "9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. 10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." 11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." 12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Here's what Paul is doing. He's saying, "If we look at our works and if we look at the aspect of the law and trying to keep them, we are in deep trouble. Actually, we are cursed." Because if we live strictly under the aspect of the law and trying to keep them on our own, it says throughout Scripture, "As soon as you've broken one of them, you are cursed and condemned." And Paul says, "If you live that way, you are cursed."

When I was in California, there was a street evangelist by the name of Ray Comfort. Some of you may have heard him. He's got a great accent so he was always fun to listen to. But he would come and do chapels at the school where I was teaching and he would talk about going to speak with people. He would say, "The biggest thing they always say is, 'I'm a good person.'"

And he'd say to them, "So have you ever told a lie in your life?" And they would go, "Well, yeah." "That makes you a liar. Have you ever taken something that didn't belong to you? You know, like even a cookie when your mom said you couldn't have it? That makes you a thief." Have you ever hated somebody? Because according to Christ hating someone is just like killing them. So now you are a murderer who is also a lying thief. How are we doing so far? I'm thinking we're in trouble.

And Paul says, "If you think about living that way, where you try to do good on your own, you will never make it because you are under a curse." And then he says, "Here is the beautiful part of justification. Jesus came, lived a perfect life and took that curse for you. So if Jesus came and took the curse for you, why do we go back to trying to do it on our own? Why do we keep trying to make it right with our own strength? When Jesus says, "I send you a comforter to be with you and to help you go through this."

And if you're wondering about the word Gentiles there, Gentiles there is the same word which is used in Matthew 28, when Jesus gives the Great Commission to say go into all nations ethos. Unless you happen to be born a Jew and you... all Gentiles.

But God says, "I am going to the diversity of the nations and I'm gathering them to myself." Then Paul says, "Let me explain this a little bit further."

Because in reality, justification and belief is based on a promise.

Justify

Belief

Promise

Sanctify

Works

If we look at the other side, sanctification... or if you look at works... is based on law.

Justify

Belief

Promise

Sanctify

Works

Law

Here Paul is speaking to the Jews who have lived growing up with the law. And so their idea is "hold on, we've got the law." In verse 13, Paul starts talking about, "How does promise and law actually fit together?" In Galatians 3:15, Paul says, "**15** Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life." [He's speaking to Jews. They all get it.]

Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case." [And when he talks about duly covenant there, it would be for example, for any of us who have made a will and last testament, that is a duly covenant, which means when your will is opened, it cannot be changed. This is what it is. Here it is. So that's the duly covenant.]

16 The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. **17** What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. **18** For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

19 Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. **20** A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one. **21** Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. **22** But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Let's back up and take this apart a little bit. So first of all it says, "...to Abraham and to his seed." Now we all know that seed is one of those wonderful words which could be singular or plural. Paul makes a distinction here and says it's definitely not plural. So he's talking about seed and you go, "Well, Abraham had more than one kid." So here Paul is saying it in a very distinct way. We all know from Jewish background, when we talk about Abraham's seed, it's Isaac, and then Jacob and then Judah. Then you can read the genealogy until you get to Jesus. And Jesus is a direct descendant. So when God said, "I make a promise that your seed... your direct descendant will be that person for the entire world," he's referring to Jesus.

But there's a beautiful part to that. The people of Israel all understood themselves as children of Abraham. They were all considered children of Abraham even though they were in many ways not in that direct line of Jesus. As we will see, we are now spiritual children of Abraham. So even though we are not in that direct line, we are still covered under the establishment of that promise.

But then he talks about the law. And this is a part where we often go, "Okay, so how does this make sense? How do we figure out this whole bit of the law telling us that here's what we need to do and how does that fit in with the promise?" There are many of the Jews who would say, "Well, we've got the promise. And then later, it became the law. And then when Jesus came, He got rid of the law." And Paul is saying, "No, the law actually helps us understand the promise. It helps us clarify what it means to live under that promise." And the promise tells us that we are children of God.

So to make this really clear, we need to go to the next piece and the next piece begins in Galatians 3:23 and goes through to Galatians 4:7.

23 Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. **24** So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. **25** Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, **27** for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. **28** There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and 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.

4 What I am saying is that as long as an heir is underage, he is no different from a slave, although he owns the whole estate. 2 The heir is subject to guardians and trustees until the time set by his father. 3 So also, when we were underage, we were in slavery under the elemental spiritual forces of the world. 4 But when the set time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under the law, 5 to redeem those under the law, that we might receive adoption to sonship. 6 Because you are his sons, God sent the Spirit of his Son into our hearts, the Spirit who calls out, "Abba, Father." 7 So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir.

So let's put that into perspective. When Christ justified us, he made it so that God became our Father.

Justify
Belief
Promise
Father

Sanctify
Works
Law

In the Old Testament, the way they viewed God was as a judge.

Justify
Belief
Promise
Father

Sanctify
Works
Law
Judge

Paul is saying, "There is a difference now in how you live." Do you live as God as Father or do you live thinking that God is your judge? Now, both are true. God is our Father. And when the world ends, we will be judged by the judge of judge, the King of kings, the Lord of lords. But there is a difference in our relationship.

When we think of God as our Father, we also see us as a son.

Justify
Belief
Promise
Father
Son/heir

Sanctify
Works
Law
Judge

And I'm going to use that word just for a minute simply because it connects to this one... and I'll explain that in just a minute.

When we have an aspect of a judge, we see ourselves as a slave.

Justify
Belief
Promise
Father
Son/heir

Sanctify
Works
Law
Judge
Slave

Now, on here, I wrote Son, and some of you are thinking, "I should write son/daughter" which is true. And Paul talks about that... that in Christ, it is not male or female. We are all the same. But he uses the term son. That is because as a Jew, they understood very clearly that it was only a son who would receive an inheritance. And Paul is speaking to Jews. So when he talks about "son" here, he is talking about those who receive an inheritance.

In our reality, in here, you would have both sons and daughters receiving the inheritance.

Justify
Belief
Promise
Father
Son/heir

Sanctify
Works
Law
Judge
Slave

(Sons/daughters)

But he says to the people, "You are looking at God in one of two ways. You either see God as Father or you see God as judge." He says, "The law is this time when you see God as Father, but you are an underage person." So you may not inherit yet. So the term in here used is "guardian" in the NIV. The actual term is more like a "tutor" or one who teaches or some may say a nanny, one who takes care of.

What Paul is saying is that in this **time of the law**,

Justify

Belief

Promise

Father

Son/heir

(Sons/daughters)

Sanctify

Works

Law

Judge

Slave

as you are growing in your faith, there are people who need to come around you who need to say, "Look, this is how you need to live. You need to live this way **because you have a God who gave you a promise.**"

Justify

Belief

Promise

Father

Son/heir

(Sons/daughters)

Sanctify

Works

Law

Judge

Slave

And Paul said, "From the time of Moses to the time of Jesus, **this was the only option.**" Because all you knew was God as judge. All you knew was, "You have to learn the rules to grow up."

Sanctify

Works

Law

Judge

Slave

And then **Jesus came** and Jesus fulfilled the promise so that now we have God as Father. In that, we can now live in that space.

Justify

Belief

Promise

Father

Son/heir

(Sons/daughters)

Let me give you an example. I heard this one first from John Piper. This year my wife and I will be celebrating our 36th anniversary. I want you to imagine that on August 23, the day of our anniversary, I come home with 36 roses and knock on our door and Renee answers. I say, "Dear Renee, 36 years ago I promised to love you. And so today I am giving you these roses and I'm taking you out for dinner to fulfill my duty."

I can tell you right now that would not go over well. Just saying. And what we often do is this... this is where we're at. Do we live in a way in which we say to God, "God, you promised to love me as your kid and you made a covenant with me and you call me to be yours. And so today, I am going to fulfill my duty and mark the boxes so that I do what I'm supposed to do."

In reality, what happens on August 23 is I come back with the 36 roses... now I'll tell you right now, I probably will not buy her 36 roses on August 23... but if I come to the door and I knock on the door, and I stand here with roses in front of me and I say, "Dear Renee, I love you so very much and it would be my honor and my privilege and my greatest pleasure to spend the night taking you out and treating you as I love you." And you might think, "Well that's kind of selfish on you. You're doing this because it's your greatest honor?"

But it's my honor because I love her and she has fulfilled my love. And God says, "I promise to love you and I will fulfill that in every way and your greatest pleasure is to hang out with me." And that brings us to prayer.

What is the best way to take this set if we want to move this from a place of works to a place of grace and move it on this side? (flipcharts are side by side now)

Justify Sanctify

Belief Works

Promise Law

Father Judge

Son/heir Slave

(Sons/daughters)

What do we need to do? We need to spend time with God. We need to spend time with God in prayer. We need to spend time with God and the Word. Then the change comes. Right now we live in this world of checkboxes. Here's a box, check it off.



When we understand and when we spend time with God and we understand His love for us, this checkbox no longer becomes a checkbox. It now becomes a gift



in which each day we knock on the door of heaven and we say, "Dear God, I love you so much and it would be my greatest pleasure to spend the day with you. When I look at the things that you want me to do, Lord, it is a joy to be able to do them and to live my life in that space where you say, "Here's where I want you to be and this is what I want you to do and I'm going to believe in your promise."

AW Tozer wrote this, "God is looking for people through whom He can do the impossible. What a pity that we plan only the things we can do by ourselves." God says, "People of Living Hope, I'm inviting you to spend time with me and do the impossible." And what does the impossible look like?

The impossible looks like basketball camp just a month from now. The impossible looks like children's programs and children's leaders. The impossible looks like a week in which we are immersed in God's presence. Spending time in community and in service. The impossible looks like becoming a Stephen minister and spending time with someone else and always being there. The impossible is seeing the budget being met and understand that God says, "I give you all that you need."

God says I am doing the impossible. And when we say we are becoming more and more like Christ all time, not on our own works

Sanctify

Works

Law

Judge

Slave

but because of our faith in Christ.

Justify

Belief

Promise

Father

Son/heir

(Sons/daughters)

Then we can live by the Spirit and the Spirit will help us do which with God is possible. Let's pray.

Dear Lord, we thank You that You are the God of impossible. Lord, we thank You that You have given us your law to love You and to see what it's like to live for you. Lord, may we never have that as a checkbox. But Lord, may we have that as a gift that we give to you and that we celebrate your love for us and our love for You. Lord, thank You that it's a promise that you gave us that it's not dependent on our works, but that it comes from you. In Jesus' name, Amen.

Transcribed by: *Liza Perry*