

Let's Worship God

10th-15th June 2024
Galatians



Galatians



The background of the central section is a textured, aged parchment map. It features faint, historical-style labels for various regions and cities, including 'Belgica', 'TUNDINGIUM', 'Macedonia', 'Thracia', 'Sardinia', 'Parsoli', 'Thuria', 'Macedonia', 'Thracia', 'Sardinia', 'Parsoli', 'Thuria', 'Macedonia', 'Thracia', 'Sardinia', 'Parsoli', 'Thuria'. The word 'Galatians' is written in a large, bold, black, gothic-style font across the center, with a distressed, ink-like texture. It is framed by two horizontal lines with decorative, leaf-like flourishes at the ends.

Galatians

Monday - Galatians 3:10-12 - Keeping the Law Can't Get Us Into Heaven

If you were to ask someone on the street why they thought Christians hoped to get into Heaven, the answer would almost invariably be 'because of what they do'. Because they're decent people, because they live good lives, because they think they're better than those around them. And so in the face of all that, v10 is absolutely shocking. Paul says - no, you'll not be blessed because of your attempt to get right with God by keeping the law. Actually, it's the complete opposite. You'll be cursed.

Why isn't obeying the law going to get us into Heaven? Because we can't do it. We can't perfectly keep the law. But the false teachers Paul is warning his readers about are encouraging the Galatians to obey the law in order to get to Heaven.

But Paul is writing to urge them to think about exactly what it is they'll be getting themselves in for if they try and go down that road. Because if they want to get to Heaven by keeping the law, they're going to have to perfectly keep every last part of it, every day of their lives. And that's something they just won't be able to do.

In v10 Paul quotes from Deuteronomy 27: 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by ALL THINGS written in the Book of the Law'. Not just some things. But all things. And the quote finishes 'and do them'. It's not just about NOT doing wrong things. It's about actually doing everything the law demands. Often we can reduce God's law to not doing things. But it also requires us to do things like love God with ALL our heart, soul, mind and strength. Can you do that? Perfectly? Every day of your life? If not, you'll not get to Heaven by keeping the law.

Paul's also trying to get across to them that you can't mix faith and works. You have to pick either one or the other. That's what he means when he says in v12: 'the law is not of faith'. That doesn't mean that the law is bad - but it means that you have to decide between either law or faith as a way of getting to Heaven. They're like fire and water. They both have their place, but they can't be used for the same purpose at the same time.

Questions

1. Why isn't obeying the law going to get us into heaven?
2. What is God's standard?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the salvation of family and friends.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 68 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Galatians

Tuesday - Galatians 3:10-12 - How This Applies to Us?

This isn't some new teaching in these verses. 'The righteous shall live by faith' is quoted 3 times in the New Testament - but it's originally from the Old Testament. So even in the Old Testament, believing Jews were those who lived by faith - not by works. Yes, v12 is still true: 'The one who does them shall live by them'. It's a quote from Leviticus. If we could do the works of the law, we could live by them. But we can't do them, so we can't live by them.

So how does this all apply to us today?

You need to realise just what you're signing up for if you're going to try to keep the law to get into Heaven. Because it won't be enough to obey God in some things. It won't be enough to obey him in most things. You will have to obey him in every detail. If he tells you not to do something, to do it just once will bring you under his condemnation. If he tells you to do something, and you don't do it, even just once, you'll be condemned.

If you're living under the misconception that God will accept you because you've done your best, let God's Word leave you in no doubt. Your best isn't good enough. God demands perfect obedience.

But what if you ARE a believer in Jesus Christ? Remember that the law is not of faith. As a Christian you should want to please God. You should want to do what he says. But never fall into thinking that you're more acceptable to God through what you do. The Bible is clear - you can please or displease God by your actions. But you can't make yourself any more right with him. Never start thinking that you're more deserving of salvation than others, because you obey God and they don't.

Questions

1. What does God command?
2. Can we make ourselves right with God by what we do?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that our thinking would be clear about the law and faith.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 69 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Galatians

Wednesday - Galatians 3:13-14 - Jesus Taking the Curse of the Law For His People

God's curse falls on all who fail to keep his law perfectly. As soon as Adam and Eve sinned, they experienced God's curse. And since then, to use the the words of the Catechism, all mankind have been born under God's wrath and curse. And this isn't a curse which will just disappear once a certain amount of time has passed. This is a curse which each of us will lie under for eternity unless someone is able to come and lift it off us. And amazingly, there is someone who can do that! That's the message of the gospel. Not that we can work our way up to Heaven. We lie completely ruined under the curse of a broken law. But Jesus came to lift the curse from us and take it on himself. That's what Paul describes in verse 13. How could the holy, sinless, Son of God who is blessed forever be called a curse? Because he took upon himself the penalty for our law-breaking. Martin Luther called it the Great Exchange. Jesus takes the curse that we deserved for our law-breaking - and we get his righteous record of law-keeping. And where did this Great Exchange take place? On the cross. Jesus was hanging there as someone under God's curse. So if Jesus took the curse we deserved - what do we get? Well, we get the exact opposite of what he got, and the exact opposite of what we deserve. The answer's in v14. What's the opposite of curse? 'Blessing!'

This was what the law couldn't do. There are 2 things that the law can do. It can pronounce a curse on the disobedient. And it can pronounce blessing on the obedient. But what about people like us who are disobedient and yet long to be right with God? The law can't help us. And that's where we need Jesus Christ. Jesus can give what the law can't. He can give the blessing of Abraham to sinful people like us - because he has taken the curse in our place.

So what is this blessing of Abraham? The blessing is new life in Jesus Christ. It's the Holy Spirit living in us. Again, this shows us that Abraham and the other believers in the Old Testament were saved in the same way we are. They had Jesus Christ dwelling in their hearts by the power of the Holy Spirit, and so do we. The law wasn't able to make Abraham or Moses right with God. And it isn't able to make us right with God either. For that, Jesus had to come, take our curse, and earn God's blessing for us. We deserve nothing. He has given us everything.

Questions

1. Who takes the curse for His people?
2. How can we be made right with God?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that Christ took the curse on our behalf.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 70 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Galatians

Thursday - Galatians 3:15-18 - What the Law Isn't For

Paul points out that Abraham was saved by faith 430 years before the law was given. But maybe the false teachers will grant him that and say that it's just everyone from Moses onwards who must be saved by keeping the law. That God added the law on to his promise to Abraham at a later date. And so to this Paul responds by saying that even human beings don't operate that way! As humans, we know that we can't - or at least we shouldn't - go back on a deal. But the false teachers in Galatia are basically implying that God did.

V16 talks about God's promise to Abraham. For example, back in Genesis 22 God had said: 'I will surely bless you, and I will surely multiply your offspring as the stars of heaven and as the sand that is on the seashore. And your offspring shall possess the gate of his enemies, and in you and in your offspring shall all the nations of the earth be blessed'. Paul tells us here that because God made the promise about Abraham's 'offspring' and not his 'offsprings' that this was a promise about Jesus Christ. Yes, Abraham's physical descendants are included. But ultimately this was a promise about the coming of Jesus, and the nations of the earth being blessed in him. So for Abraham to trust God's promise was to trust in the promised Messiah. Abraham was saved by faith in Christ. He wasn't saved by law-keeping.

If God's covenant with Moses was totally separate from his covenant with Abraham, then God could have added in whatever new conditions he wanted. But instead, because it's the same covenant, he can't. The fact that God's covenant with Abraham and his covenant with Moses were one and the same is obvious if you think about it. Where was Moses leading the people out of Egypt towards? The Promised Land. And who was the promise of the land first made to? Abraham. There are only two options in v18. Either Abraham and Moses believed God's promises about the inheritance - or they were trying to get the inheritance by their own obedience. It's either one or the other. If we skip down to v29, we see that those who are in Christ are Abraham's offspring. We're heirs of the same promise. And this part of God's Word tells us that God's promise hasn't changed. There is one faith, one salvation, and one way of obtaining that salvation from Abraham right through to us.

Questions

1. How was Abraham saved?
2. How was Moses saved?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that we can be an heir of God's promises.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 71 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Galatians

Friday - Galatians 3:19-22 - What the Law is For

As with many things, it's possible to go to two extremes when it comes to the law of God. One extreme, to which the false teachers in Galatia had gone, was to try and say it was necessary for salvation. The other extreme is to say that it isn't relevant at all. And that's an objection that Paul is clearly anticipating. He begins in v19 by saying that the law was added because of transgressions. Now this isn't a straightforward verse. But thankfully we can get a bit of help in understanding it by turning to the book of Romans, where Paul writes some similar things. For example, in Romans 4:15 he says: 'Where there is no law, there is no transgression'. So to put those two verses together. Where there is no law, there is no transgression. And the law was added because of transgressions - or as one version says, for the sake of defining transgressions.

And it's perhaps easier to begin with what those verses aren't saying. They're not saying that before the giving of the law by Moses that there wasn't such a thing as sin. Before the 10 commandments were given, Cain knew it was wrong to murder Abel, Joseph knew it would be wrong to commit adultery with Potiphar's wife, and God's people as a whole knew why it was wrong to gather manna on the Sabbath.

When God gave the 10 commandments through Moses, he didn't bring in any new requirements - he simply showed the people how far they'd strayed from obeying him. The law doesn't invent something that wasn't already there. It just makes it clear so that people aren't left in any doubt. And so Paul says in Romans 7:7: 'For I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, "You shall not covet"'. Had Paul coveted before? Of course! But it was only when the Spirit of God brought the law of God home to his heart that he was convicted about it.

The law doesn't make us sinful. Instead, it exposes how sinful we really are. And so when Paul says in Romans 5:20 that 'the law came in to increase the trespass' - it means that the law came in to show us that we hadn't just committed one or two little infringements here or there, but that we'd been living miles outside God's law. Giving us the law is a loving thing for God to do because it stops us pretending that everything's ok, and it drives us to Jesus.

Questions

1. Was there sin before the giving of the law?
2. What is the main purpose of the law?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for the law showing us how sinful we really are and driving us to Christ.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 72 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

Galatians

Saturday - Galatians 3:23-29 - The School Teacher

In v23 Paul says that before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed. Now that clearly doesn't mean that people in the Old Testament didn't have faith. Paul has just been arguing, especially back in v6, that Abraham was saved by faith. And so most commentators see 'before faith came' as another way of saying 'before Jesus came'. That is, 'before the object of our faith came'. And until that happened, we were imprisoned. The law had something definite in view. It was all pointing to the coming of Jesus. The 10 commandments showed men and women that they had no hope of getting right with God by themselves. So it pointed them forward to the one who was to come.

Paul uses yet another illustration to describe the law's purpose in v25. He describes the law as our guardian. The older versions say schoolmaster. Literally the word is pedagogue. To understand this, we need to know something about how wealthy Roman families brought up children. They would have a slave called a pedagogue, who would be responsible for overseeing the life and education of their son. The pedagogue had the authority to discipline the son. Basically, his job was to keep him on the straight and narrow until he reached adulthood. And there's a sense in which the law did that for the nation of Israel. It kept them separate from the other nations until their king came. They were taught to make distinctions between clean and unclean food and so on. It helped keep Israel as a distinct nation until Jesus came.

But the false teachers in Galatia want the Christians there to keep up these distinctions. Paul says in v26 - you're not children anymore - you're sons of God through faith. You're not to try and go back in time. Now that Jesus has come, your distinctiveness is to be seen in living holy lives, not in what you eat and drink. So the ceremonial laws that the false teachers are trying to impose are no longer in place. And in v27 that includes circumcision. It's been replaced by baptism. Paul rounds off his argument in v28. The old distinctions no longer apply. And so we end in v29 with the main theme. Abraham was saved by faith in Christ. The whole law system was first and foremost to show us our need of Christ. Those who are Abraham's offspring are those whose faith is in the same Saviour that Abraham trusted in.

Questions

1. Whom did the law point forward to?
2. How is the law like a school teacher?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Galatians 3:28

Praise: Psalm 73 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced
by the Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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