

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Galatians 3:1-22. What strikes you in this part of Paul's letter? What questions come to mind? How might this have sounded to the first recipients of this letter?
2. Paul calls the Galatian Christians "foolish" two times (Gal. 3:1, 3). In what senses is it foolish to add works to the gospel of Christ?
3. Paul makes a major contrast between "faith" & "the law." How would you outline his argument? What would cause someone to retreat from a liberating spiritual life based on grace into a legalistic law-oriented spiritual life?
4. What difference does it make when you base your relationship with God on how well you keep a list of rules, rather than living in light of the truth that God accepts you through Jesus Christ & your trust in his sacrifice for you?
5. Has your approach to & perspective on being a follower of Jesus changed over the years? How? What's the lived outcome of the difference between the two? If you think things are pretty much the same today for you spiritually as they were 10, 15, 30 years ago, do you think that's as it should be or does something need to change? What?
6. What does Paul say about the connection between the Holy Spirit and salvation in Galatians 3:2-5? When do people receive the Holy Spirit? Explain your answer as best you can?
7. When are you most tempted to please people & seek their approval? What would change if, in those times, you lived to please God who is already pleased with you? Discuss the following characteristics of "people pleasing:" give in to peer pressure, downplay the call of obedience implicit in faith, & reluctant to confront intentional sin in others. What advice would you offer to someone struggling in this way?
8. If we are free from the demands of the law, why should we as Christians strive to live a holy life? What role does the law have for a follower of Jesus?
9. Compare & contrast what it means to receive something by promise that is kept to you vs. receiving something that you work to achieve?
10. If we are imprisoned under sin, how does that make sense of why the law was added? If the law's role is to make us aware of our sinfulness, how much then do you appreciate the free gift of Christ's salvation?
11. According to verse 22, why was the Law incapable of imparting life?

Living Water Fellowship

4th Sunday in Easter – 21st April 2024

COME TO JESUS

GATHERING SONG: Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

PRAYER OF THE DAY & WELCOME:

SONG: Only a Holy God

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Galatians 3:1-14

¹ Oh, foolish Galatians! Who has cast an evil spell on you? For the meaning of Jesus Christ's death was made as clear to you as if you had seen a picture of his death on the cross. ² Let me ask you this one question: Did you receive the Holy Spirit by obeying the law of Moses? Of course not! You received the Spirit because you believed the message you heard about Christ. ³ How foolish can you be? After starting your new lives in the Spirit, why are you now trying to become perfect by your own human effort? ⁴ Have you experienced so much for nothing? Surely it was not in vain, was it?

⁵ I ask you again, does God give you the Holy Spirit & work miracles among you because you obey the law? Of course not! It is because you believe the message you heard about Christ. ⁶ In the same way, "Abraham believed God, & God counted him as righteous because of his faith." ⁷ The real children of Abraham, then, are those who put their faith in God. ⁸ What's more, the Scriptures looked forward to this time when God would make the Gentiles right in his sight because of their faith. God proclaimed this good news to Abraham long ago when he said, "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith.

¹⁰ But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe & obey all the commands that are written in God's Book of the Law." ¹¹ So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, "It is through faith that a righteous person has life." ¹² This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, "It is through obeying the law that a person has life."

¹³ But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." ¹⁴ Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

BIBLE READING: Galatians 3:15-22

¹⁵ Dear brothers & sisters, here's an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or amend an irrevocable agreement, so it is in this case. ¹⁶ God gave the promises to Abraham & his child. Notice that the Scripture doesn't say "to his children," as if it meant many descendants. Rather, it says "to his child"—that, of course, means Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I am trying to say: The agreement God made with Abraham could not be cancelled 430 years later when God gave the law to Moses. God would be breaking his promise. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance could be received by keeping the law, then it would not be the result of accepting God's promise. But God graciously gave it to Abraham as a promise.

¹⁹ Why, then, was the law given? It was given alongside the promise to show people their sins. But the law was designed to last only until the coming of the child who was promised. God gave his law through angels to Moses, who was the mediator between God & the people. ²⁰ Now a mediator is helpful if more than one party must reach an agreement. But God, who is one, did not use a mediator when he gave his promise to Abraham. ²¹ Is there a conflict, then, between God's law & God's promises? Absolutely not! If the law could give us new life, we could be made right with God by obeying it. ²² But the Scriptures declare that we are all prisoners of sin, so we receive God's promise of freedom only by believing in Jesus Christ.

THE MESSAGE: *LIVING EXCLUSIVELY...BY FAITH*

OFFERING SONG: So You Would Come

PRAYERS:

OUR CHRISTIAN CONFESSION: *THE APOSTLES' CREED*

I believe in God, the Father almighty, maker of heaven and earth.
I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord,
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,
born of the Virgin Mary,
suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, dead, and buried.
He descended into hell. The third day he rose again from the dead.
He ascended into heaven,
and sits at the right hand of God, the Father almighty,
from thence he will come to judge the living and the dead.
I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy Christian church,
the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins,
the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

THE COMMUNION:

Since we have been raised with Christ Jesus, let us set our minds on heavenly things, not on the things that are on earth. Let's pray together...

Gracious God, sinful & broken we are. We too often neglect fellowship with our loved ones; we neglect our communion with you, & we excuse ourselves from worship & witness. In a world of plenty, we often lack generosity leaving others to. Free us from such bondage, that we may truly reveal the presence of Christ in our lives. Amen.

Christ gave to the church the bread of heaven, his flesh & blood, for our forgiveness, life & salvation. Paul records that gracious gift with these words:

I pass on to you what I received from the Lord himself. On the night when he was betrayed, the Lord Jesus took bread & gave thanks to God for it. Then he broke it in pieces saying, "This is my body, given for you. Do this to remember me." In the same way, he took the cup of wine saying, "This cup is the new covenant between God & his people—an agreement confirmed with my blood. Do this to remember me as often as you drink it." For every time you eat this bread & drink this cup, you proclaim the Lord's death until he comes again.

Where is another God like you, who pardons the guilt of the remnant, overlooking the sins of his special people? Once again you will have compassion on us. You trample our sins under your feet and throw them into the depths of the ocean! *(Micah 7:18-19)*

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now & forever. Amen.

Worship during Communion: Wonderful, Merciful Saviour

GO IN HIS POWER

BLESSING: **† _____, child of God,
Christ makes his home in your heart as you trust him!
Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: Blessed Be Your Name

SHOW HIS LOVE