

Faith

Passage: Galatians 3:1-14 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 260830

SUMMARY

Preaching from Galatians 3:1-6, Steve confronts Paul's rebuke of the Galatians for turning from the gospel of faith back toward law-keeping. Three points: our faith saves us, not our own righteousness -- Paul asks them directly what actually caused them to receive the Spirit in the first place; justification happens the instant we believe (we immediately receive Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit) while sanctification is the lifelong, different-for-everyone process of being set apart that follows, worked out through obedience to Christ's three commands (love God, love others, make disciples) even through real failure; and freedom in Christ means we are no longer bound by the law. Steve also draws a practical distinction between the Holy Spirit's conviction (grace-rooted, moves us forward) and the enemy's condemnation (fear-rooted, dwells on the past), and names three steps for when we fail: confess it to God, redirect our focus back to Christ, and repent.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- Faith alone saves -- not personal righteousness or law-keeping; Paul asks the Galatians directly what actually caused them to receive the Spirit in the first place.
- Justification happens the instant you believe -- you immediately receive Christ's righteousness and the Holy Spirit -- but sanctification is the lifelong process that follows, different for every believer, and never finished this side of death.
- Real spiritual growth shows two ways at once: a growing hunger for God's word and a growing awareness of your own sin -- the more mature you get, the more you notice how far you have to go.
- Conviction and condemnation can look similar but come from opposite places -- conviction is grace-rooted and moves you forward, condemnation is fear-rooted and dwells on the past. Know which one you're listening to.
- Failure is part of sanctification, not proof you're not saved -- the response is the same three steps every time: confess it to God, redirect your focus back to Christ, and repent.

Introduction

Alright, this morning we are going to be in Galatians chapter 3. We are going to go to the first six verses. I changed my mind after I gave the verses to Becky this week. So I was like, well, we don't want to go to one. So if you guys would please stand with me. We're going to read these first six verses. And we will die and do it.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 3:1-6

Chapter 3. O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, the four whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Have you, having begun the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Therefore, he who supplies the Spirit to you, and works spiritually among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Just as Abraham believed God, and it was counseled to him for righteousness.

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, we just thank you for today. We thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for this fellowship and this time together to come together and be able to celebrate you, glorify you, and in order to just worship you. Father, we thank you for who you are, we thank you for the sacrifice of your Son, and Father, that we're going to be into today. We thank you for just the simplicity of what the Gospel really is. So, Father, be with us as we go through this work. Help you be ahead of time and encourage you to teach every one of us. Father, if there is anything that we have that, as we go through this, that we feel, will treat the Father himself to be something that we are teaching every one of us.

Just willing to look at it. Father, we thank you. And we ask all these things for your Son. All right, we've got to transition here. Again, Paul began talking about this false teaching that was going on, and then he went into establishing who he was, his authority, why I am able to come to you and say the things that I am saying to you, that he is an apostle, that he is a preacher of one true gospel. And now he turns his attention back to Galatians.

Verse 1 there, essentially what he says is, I have clearly and explicitly shared the Gospel with you. I have told you exactly what happened. I have told you, I have fully explained Christ, His purpose, and you believed it, you put your faith in it. Why are you turning away from it? Who did this? Why is this happening? You thought you understood it. I thought you understood it. And here you are, so quick to

turn away from it. The word foolish that they use here is the original word breaks down into two. It's got a pre and the initial or the actual subject. And it means to not be comprehended. So he's like, what are you not comprehending? What have I said to you guys that is telling you, now I don't understand?

What didn't you understand? Or what caused you to want to ignore what I have said to you? So the three things that I want us to take away from this is, number one, first and foremost, our faith saves us, not our own righteousness.

Number two, justification will be immediate. Sanctification will take you the rest of your life.

And number three, we're going to talk about the difference between freedom in Christ and being bound by the law. What the difference is between those two.

Point 1: Our Faith Saves Us, Not Our Righteousness

First, our faith saves us, not our righteousness. There in verse two, he says, this only I want to learn from you. Did you receive the spirit by the works of the law or by the hearing of faith? What when I came to you and preach the gospel to you, what what caused you to want to believe it? Was it how good you were? Was it all of the things that you had done in your life that were so great?

Or were you saved by faith? Were you saved by I know what God has done? I know what Christ has done for me. And that's what I believe. And that faith is what.

Saves me, not what I've done.

He asked them, how do you how did you how did how did you receive the Holy Spirit? How did you you have the spirit? That's what he says. He says, did you receive the spirit? How did how did you become that? Did you was it by what you had done in your life? Because clearly that hadn't worked for you guys, because most of the people that they're talking to here, most of the people he's writing to in Galatia were Gentiles. They didn't have the law. They didn't have the Old Testament law. So how could they live by something? And that's how they received the spirit if they never had it to begin with, if they never had the law that to live by to begin with. He's telling them, you didn't have that, but somehow you still became Christians. So now how all of a sudden is it that you hear from somebody else and say, now I need to go back and and understand what the law is and live by the law so that I can be saved. He's he's trying. He's he's like, guys, I'm trying to figure this out. That's why he says, have you been he says, have you been bewitched? He's like, what have you who came to you and said something to you? There is no way with what I preached to you, what I told you and what you said you believed that there should be any reason that you all believe this. Why are you doing that?

There in verse three.

Having begun in the spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Faith in the gospel isn't just what gets us saved. That's not just our step in the door. Our faith in the gospel is the whole journey. That is the whole purpose of our journey and our salvation.

Is that we keep believing it.

We aren't born again through faith and then raised up and matured in our salvation through the law. It's not how we do things and what we do. We don't do things.

To stay saved once saved, we are always saved.

We're born again by faith and then we are perfected by that same faith.

Once we've been born again in faith, the Holy Spirit guides us. That's what it's what he's telling them. If you receive the Holy Spirit, you are being guided now by the Holy Spirit. The things that you are being led to do aren't because you feel like you have to do it to be saved by the law. If you are feeling compelled to do something, it's because the Holy Spirit is compelling you to do so. That's bearing fruit. It's what Paul talks about when he says bearing fruit.

Point 2: Justification Is Immediate, Sanctification Is Lifelong

Number two, justification will be immediate. Sanctification will take us to rest of our lives. Alright, two big words that we all probably know the meanings to, but what is justification? What is that? What is justification supposed to mean?

Justification is a fancy word for saying God has forgiven you of your sin and you are now imputed with the righteousness of Christ. That is the simplicity of salvation. You repent and you have faith. You confess your sins to God. You believe that what Jesus did on the cross 2,000 years ago was for you. Personally, for each and every one of us. His death on the cross was on our behalf. If you believe that, and you believe that his sacrifice was sufficient to cover your sin, that is what saves you. Your repentance is realizing that there is nothing that you are going to be able to do to make that happen. The only thing that we bring to the table for our salvation is the sin required that required his original sacrifice. That's all we bring to the table. We don't do anything. We can't do or win anything without God, without the sacrifice of Christ. That is all that we have. We can't work our way towards God. Jesus already did that for us. That's why it's called the gift of eternal life that he gives us freely. That's why it's the gift of eternal life.

When you make the decision to receive Christ into your heart, you will immediately receive two things. Number one, you immediately receive his righteousness. One thing that at that point, if you receive Christ into your heart, if you do that and immediately you die, guess what? You were saved.

You have Christ's righteousness. It doesn't matter after you get saved what you've done, what you do, how many people you bring to Christ, how many times you went to the soup kitchen and fed people, how many times you've done anything good. Once you have received Christ, you receive his righteousness. The second thing you receive is his Holy Spirit. You have a guide. You have a mentor. You have something. You have a guide to teach you and guide you and show you what it is that you should be doing with your life from there on out. So how do we know that that worked? How do we know that we've given our, that that faith is real? How do we know that we have fully accepted Jesus into our heart? We're like, okay, well, I've got his righteousness. I've got his Holy Spirit. Well, how do I know that? How can we know that we have the Holy Spirit working in us? There are two very distinct things that we will get. There are two very distinct things and there are some points underneath of it. But number one, you will desire a greater knowledge of God and his son Jesus. You will desire it. You will be hungry for it. You'll be hungry to learn. You'll want to spend time in the word and in prayer.

You'll desire discipleship and guidance from more mature Christians in your life. I explained this to somebody the other day. Right now, I don't know if you guys can, but I can smell food downstairs and I was already a little bit hungry, but smelling that food has made me even more hungry. How many times are we around the word of God, but we just don't quite take it in? How many times, how many, how many of us, I knew I grew up this way. I grew up in church, but I wasn't saved. I grew up in church. I grew up around the word. I, I, I was surrounded by it, but I didn't accept it right away. I smelled it, but I hadn't tasted it.

When I did, you know what? It was insatiable. The moment that I was like, this is what I have been missing my whole life. That's all I could do. That's all I wanted.

It was apparent to me that there was a change in my life.

Number two, you will find yourself concerned that you may have a lack of love for God. You'll look at your life and think, there are things that I could be doing better. You'll look at your life and think, man, I just don't think I'm doing this quite the way I should be. I don't think I'm doing this the way that God wants me to.

You'll notice your shortcomings, but then you'll also notice more and more. You'll become more sensitive and more aware to the sin that you have in your life also. Not just your shortcomings, but your sin also. You'll feel that. I've said it before. The more mature of a Christian I become, the more I realize just how terrible of a sinner I am.

It's more apparent to me the things that I'm not doing correctly with every passing moment in my walk with Christ. The things that I feel like I'm doing well, the Holy Spirit taps me on the shoulder and says, you could be doing better. And I'm like, yeah, you're right. I could be. Justification. So now

you've become justified. You have received the Holy Spirit. You have received the righteousness of Christ. What's this other word? Sanctification. What does sanctification mean? It's a fancy word. It's a big word.

Essentially, sanctify just means to set apart. It's God taking you. It's the process that God does of removing you from the, removing the desires of the world from you and setting you apart.

Taking you out of the world. It says you're supposed to live in the world, but not be of the world. We're supposed to be surrounded by people that we can share the gospel with, but we're not supposed to be just like them.

That's that setting apart. But the thing is, what we like to do is we like to look at our sanctification and the way that it worked for us and expect that that's how it works for everybody.

Our sanctification is going to look different. Each and every one of us, our sanctification is going to look totally different. There are going to be some things that people are going to look at and say, but I thought you were a Christian. How come this is still something that happens? How come this is still, guys, I will tell you right now, I will stand up here and I will be brutally honest with you guys. I still have a problem. I still have problems. I still have things. One of the biggest issues that I have, and we've talked about it at length, is I have a problem taming my tongue. I have a problem with it. I say things that I shouldn't say. I say things, and it may not be necessarily a bad word, but what I say to people isn't exactly nice or isn't exactly kind.

That's different for each and every one of us. There are things, the process of becoming sanctified for each and every one of us is going to look different. We will each spiritually mature and deepen in faith and love for Christ in different ways at different times.

Our obedience is going to require work on our part, though. And I think a lot of times that that is the thing is what we need to realize is when we feel like we're being like we're on the fast track of sanctification, it's it's because there is one of two things happening. God says you're getting ready to go do something or it's you saying, God, I'm ready to go do something and you're doing the work. You're putting in the work.

With God's help to do things. This is part of that, like we've talked about before, that pruning process, that refining process. Neither of those processes are painless. When you prune something out of your life, when you prune a bush, you're cutting something off that is likely sometimes still alive in some way. It's just not bearing fruit. You're taking parts out of your life that are no longer necessary to make room for the things that are. Refining, refining, taking out the things that are impure, taking out the impurities out of something. That's what happens when you refine it.

That's not an easy process. A lot of times that requires a dramatic amount of heat, especially in metals. That is that that's what it requires. It requires a lot of heat.

There are going to be things that God will take from you immediately. It may be anxiety. It may be addiction. It may be something. For me, it was anger. Guys, I will tell you, I was a very angry person before Christ. I was not a happy person. I was a miserable person. And that spread to anybody that I came in contact with. I was a nice guy. I was okay. I had friends. I had people I got along with. But man, it didn't take much to just set me off. And I was an angry person.

I gave my life to Christ. And that left me immediately. And I mean immediately. It was flip of a switch that is no longer there. And it was just like that. And I thank God for that. Because that's, guess what? That would have been a hard one for me. That would have been something that I would have struggled through because if I knew who I was and how I was, and I'd have struggled through that. But God in His grace took that from me immediately. I don't know why. But I thank Him for it daily. Because there are times that I catch myself feeling that heat welling up in my chest and thinking, now we're not doing this today. And that's the time that I start praying. About the time that I feel that heat is when the Holy Spirit's like, hey, you should probably pray right now instead. And that's generally what I do. And it's amazing the kind of things that God can take away from somebody immediately, and then somebody else, they'll suffer through it the rest of their life. They'll try and figure out how to get rid of it the rest of their life.

It requires work on our part a lot of the times. And that's one thing that did not require work on my part. It was just gone.

The process of us becoming more and more sanctified comes through our obedience to Christ's commands. He gave us three commands. And they all outflow from one another. Number one, the Hebrews call it, when the Jews were teaching the children, when they were bringing them into Bible school, well, it wasn't Bible school, it was Torah school. They taught them, the very first thing they taught them was what they called a Shema. It's love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, with all your strength. Number one, first and foremost, that is what you do for your life. That is what you live by. That is the number one thing that you should live by. The second one, Jesus says, and the second one is like it.

Love others as you love yourself. Or love others as Christ has loved, is what he tells his disciples. Love others the way that I have loved you, is what he tells his disciples before he leaves. If we love God, we're going to love others. Because guess what? Each and every person is one of God's creations. If we don't love God, then why would we, we wouldn't love his creation.

It's an outflowing.

Number three, the last thing he tells his disciples is go and make disciples of all nations. If you love people, if you love any and every soul that is on this earth, your desire should be for them to be saved. Your desire should be to see them in heaven. There will not be any one person in heaven that you're going to see there and be like, man, I really wish he wasn't here. No, each and every person that we see in heaven, we will be glad that they are there.

Each and every one. It doesn't matter if right now here on earth, it is the person that you cannot stand with every ounce of your being. You're going to be glad they're in heaven.

Our faith is what saves us. It's what he's telling them. And that's what he says there in verse six. He said, Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. Rad, I'm glad you used the verse from Hebrews because that was one that I was thinking of. I was like, if you read through Hebrews 11, guess what? There's all of them. Every last person that is mentioned in Hebrews 11 came before Jesus. Every last one of them. They looked forward to the faith. They had the faith and were looking forward at the Messiah, the coming Messiah. We have the benefit of being able to look back. We have the benefit of having all of it right here in front of us. They didn't have that. That's why he says faith is believing in something unseen.

We don't see it. We may not see it. The thing is, is we have it all right here. We can see it. We can read from cover to cover in this and see it that God made promises and that God was faithful to keep his promises to the people that were faithful to him. Then we get into, what does that mean?

Point 3: Freedom in Christ, Not Bound by the Law

What is this freedom in Christ that Paul talks about? What is this liberty that Paul is talking about? Number one, first and foremost, this is one of my favorite. I don't even remember where it came from, but it was one of the first things that I heard when I became a Christian. And it was before you can think about what you're going to go do for Christ, you need to realize and truly understand what it is he did for you. Because what he did for you was before you even cared or even desired him in any sort of way. And he still did it for you.

What Paul is trying to explain to them here, though, too, is that if the law had been sufficient, Jesus wouldn't come. That's why he's trying to explain to them that the law isn't sufficient. The things that you think that you need to believe and the things that you think you need to do, you don't need to do. That is what he's talking about. That's the liberty that he speaks of. That is the freedom in Christ. That is that liberty of faith.

You have hope. There's a hope that you can have because all that it requires from you is that you put your faith in Jesus and then obey him. Repent of your sins. Obey Jesus. That's it. Once you've put your faith in him, just keep doing that.

Romans 6, Paul explains to us that we are all slaves. We're either slaves to sin or we're slaves to righteousness.

Those who are slaves to sin cannot free themselves from it. But once we are freed from the penalty and the power of sin through Jesus, we become a different kind of slave. That slavery is a complete and utter peace and freedom. And most people hear that and they think, well, that doesn't sound like slavery. Like, well, it is because guess what? You have a master. You are serving Jesus. You are serving God as your master. You're not serving sin anymore.

Colossians 2, Paul warns us about falling back into the bondage of the law. When we begin enforcing rules and regulations as sign of salvation or spiritual maturity, we lose sight of the grace that we were all given through Christ. Just because you're not convicted of something doesn't mean that it is necessarily wrong for somebody else, unless it is just outright sin.

As long as what you're doing isn't sin, it doesn't make you any less Christian or any better of a Christian.

I know people that are very strong Christians that don't drink. And I know people that are very strong Christians that do drink.

There's nothing wrong with it unless you're convicted of it and you go against what you feel convicted of. I have a friend of mine who is a recovering alcoholic. Guess what? He doesn't drink for good reason. He's convicted not to do it. He says, I'm not I don't want to do anything like that again.

We.

That happens too often. We we we we start looking at things that other people are doing. We start imposing our expectations on them instead of Christ's expectations on them. We don't we look at it and we think, well, how come how come it is that I don't do this, but you do? What is that? Is that OK? Again, if it's not directly something that is just obviously a direct outright sin, then then it's not. We don't need to to to hold things against one another in that way. So how can we determine between the conviction of the Holy Spirit on something in our lives or the condemnation of the enemy through our sanctification? Two very similar things.

But they are also two on on the complete opposite ends of the spectrum.

Conviction comes from a place of grace. What Christ did for me because Jesus did this for me. I'm going to give this up because I know that it is impairing my walk with him. We do it out of love.

Conviction usually moves us forward into the future. Conviction is generally a God centered urge to change. The reason why you do it is you look at it and think I could be doing better. Like I said earlier, things that we fall short in. I think I think I could be doing better. I should I should start doing this or I should stop doing this. That's conviction.

Condemnation comes from a place of fear. What I did against God. Well, I've done this. So obviously, because of this condemnation, I God doesn't love me anymore. I need to do this better because because if I don't do this, my salvation is is in limbo. We do things out of guilt instead of out of love. We do them from a place of fear instead of a place of grace.

Condemnation likes to bring up the past, likes to point out the things that you've done wrong in the past and say, oh, well, you did this. But you aren't a good Christian.

Condemnation is self-defeating guilt. It's making you feel guilty of what you've done. Now, guilt isn't a bad thing.

Guilt can spur us into into to action for the better. But.

Conviction from the Holy Spirit leads us to do things out of love for God and others. Condemnation from the enemy tells us that what we're doing or not doing isn't even deserving of God's love.

Here's the thing.

You will fail. I will fail. I will fail you guys in in things. I will fail God and things any relationship that you have with anybody in any sort of way. Guess what? You're going to fail them at some point.

That's that's human nature. That's just who we are. Part of your sanctification will involve failure. You will fail as part of your sanctification.

Paul wasn't immune to failure. If you don't believe me, read through Romans 7, 14 through 25. What I desire to do, I don't do. What I hate, I do. He says, when I want to do good, evil rises up against me. He's Paul wasn't immune to this.

I like to look at that. I don't know if anybody's we all have had experience with this toddlers playing with toys and there can be a toy sitting over there not being played with. They can forget about it. They don't even know it's there. Until somebody else goes and picks it up, then it's the most interesting thing in the world and they want it and it has to be theirs and they're going to fight you for it. That I feel like that is exactly what Paul is saying there when he says evil rises up against me.

Here I am just minding my own business and I think I'm going to go do some good. I'm going to go. You know, I feel like I need to be doing my part. In my sanctification and you think to yourself, well, I'm going to give this up or I'm going to start doing this. And that's about the time that it gets really difficult and the enemy shows up and you think, well, I'm going to do better at this or I'm going to start giving more. I'm going to start donating my time more. And then everything shows up that starts taking your money or your time. Things pop up that were unexpected.

We will win the war.

Our victory is in Christ. The Bible clearly tells us that. But be ready because you're still going to lose many battles along the way.

It's sanctification, guys. That's that's going to be part of it. But here's the thing. First and foremost, what do we do when we fail? What should we be doing when we fail? When we fail, there are three things that we should be doing. Number one, we need to humbly confess that to God. When I fail, I need to go to God and say, you know what? The way that I handled that wasn't great. You know what? The thing that I said to that person wasn't very kind.

Father, forgive me for that. Number two, we need to redirect our focus back to Christ and away from ourselves. We get focused on ourselves sometimes, and that is when things go crazy.

Number three, we need to repent. We need to turn away from those things in our life that are causing us to stumble. I've given you guys this illustration before. I'm going to give it to you again. Repentance can be a process. There are some things that you will do. There are some things in your life that you will repent of, and it's as easy as walking down a path and turning around and walking the other direction. It's quick. It's easy. It's pretty effortless.

Now imagine turning a bicycle around on a path that's this wide. It's a little more difficult, harder to do. It becomes a little bit more cumbersome, a little more time-consuming, a little more effortless, or not as effortless. Now a car, then a boat, then a battleship. There are going to be some things in our lives, some of the things that we're going to try and turn around, some of the repentance that we're going to try and have, and it's going to be a process.

You're going to be struggling through something for a while.

But as long as you are on the right path, and as long as you are centered on Christ while you are doing it, He will help you make that happen.

Conclusion & Closing Prayer

So again, our faith is what saves us, not our righteousness. We can't do anything to save ourselves.

Justification will be immediate. You will give. You will put your faith in Christ. You will receive Him into your heart. You will receive the Holy Spirit. You are justified.

Sanctification will take you the rest of your life. You will never be fully sanctified. It's not going to happen. This side of death, you will continue to struggle with things day in, day out. And number three, we have freedom in Christ because we are no longer bound by the law.

We need to stop imposing our understanding of things on people and focus more on the grace that Christ has given us. It's too easy for us. It's human nature for us to see somebody dealing with something that you don't deal with and judge them for it.

So we need to be more patient. We need to be more gracious with people. And we need to be more understanding that not all of us are going to look the same. That not each and every one of us are going to travel the same path. So with that, we'll close us in prayer.

Father, I thank you. Father, I thank you for your word. Father, I thank you for the promise and the freedom that we have to no longer have to follow all of the rules of the law. That, Father, we have freedom in you because of the sacrifice of your son. Father, as we go through the week this week, help us to be aware of our shortcomings. Help us to be aware of the sin in our lives. And Father, help us to try and fix that.

Father, I am just as guilty of those things, wanting to ignore the things that are in my life that I think, well, I don't have to deal with that right now. But Father, if it's something that will bring me closer to you, make it something that is convicting to me.

Make it something that for me and each and every one of us is on our minds. Father, each and every one of us can be closer to you. Each and every one of us needs to do something different in our lives to bring ourselves closer to you. Because, Father, none of us are perfect. So, Father, help us. Help us each and every one this week as we go through our week to just focus on that. To look at our lives and think, God, how can I be serving you better?

Father, we love you. Father, we thank you for your word. We thank you for the ability to come to you in prayer. Father, and Father, we thank you for the time that we get to come together and fellowship for your glory.

And we ask all these things through your Son's name. Amen. Amen. All right. I'm going to go ahead and pray for a meal downstairs so that we can go down and just our chow now. And we will finish out with doxology. So, you all bow your heads. Amen.

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