THE STORY SO FAR...

- Paul is astonished that the Galatians have so quickly accepted a false gospel of faith in Christ plus works of the law that the Judaizers were teaching. They have reversed the gospel.
- The true gospel is about grace alone.
- Paul defends his message of grace by sharing his story of salvation and describing that it is a gospel that was not made up by man, but came from God.
- Paul traveled to Jerusalem to seek unity with the apostles about the message of the gospel. They all agreed in the council that their message was the same—salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.
- Peter drew back from eating with the Gentiles out of fear of the false teachers. Paul opposed him publically and said his actions were not in line with the gospel of grace. He was compelling Gentiles to feel like they had to observe Jewish customs in order to have full Christian fellowship/salvation.

Have also seen...

**Truths for Life last week**

- **Big idea:** We are justified through faith in Christ (not by works of the Law)
- **Justification:** Right standing for relationship
  - Justified, righteous in God’s sight—b/c of Christ
  - Salvation history—God want a relationship, “Christ lives in me…I live by faith in the Son of God who loved me and gave himself up for me” (2:20)
- **We all stumble** (Peter can we can, all are Peter type hypocrites)
  - Shows us our utter need on grace, apart from Christ can do nothing
  - Our sin keeps us humble
- **Our sin has an impact on others**
  - Peter—Barnabas—others
  - Conversely, when we live a life of goodness, character, rubs off
- **We need each other to keep us on the right track**
  - Paul—Peter. In love, as brother, set him straight—cause of gospel moved forward
- **Don’t make the railroad track a ladder!**
  - Don’t use good deeds, service as a way to gain God’s favor—insecurity/guilt
  - Let God’s gift of grace pull you (motivate you) along the track of obedience.
So, where are we at? (Outline)

PERSONAL: GRACE AND THE GOSPEL—chapters 1–2
DOCTRINAL: GRACE AND THE LAW—chapters 3–4
   A. The personal argument—3:1–5
   B. The scriptural argument—3:6–14
   C. The logical argument—3:15–29
   D. The historical argument—4:1–11
   E. The sentimental argument—4:12–18
   F. The allegorical argument—4:19–31

PRACTICAL: GRACE AND THE CHRISTIAN LIFE—chapters 5–6

For Starters
1. Even though we know the Christian life is about grace... why is rule keeping and doing things to gain favor with God so appealing? Why do people do this?

2. Have you ever found yourself living in the rule keeping/gaining favor with God mentality? How do you keep yourself focused on God’s grace and not your performance?

Search God’s Word, Teaching Section

READ (1-5)

1 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—

So what is the tone of the passage? What is the feel you get when you read it? Why?

(1-5) tone...
- Stern tone, almost angry, disappointed, reprimand, correcting them
- Calling the foolish and unwise.
- Says that they have been “bewitched”
Paul appeals to their conversion experience, when they first came to Christ (faith, grace).

1. They clearly saw that Christ was crucified (1). This was the gospel that Paul preached to them and they accepted Jesus by faith in the work of Christ on the cross.
2. When they came to Christ, the received the Spirit—by grace, not law. “They believed what they heard” (2) This means that they put their faith in Christ.

“They believed—then received the Spirit—comes upon conversion.

“He saved us, not because of righteous things we had done, but because of his mercy. He saved us by the washing of rebirth and renewal by the Holy Spirit, whom he poured out on us generously through Jesus Christ our Savior, so that, having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the hope of eternal life.”

(Titus 3:5)
Not anything we have done!

Upon conversion, we are renewed, reborn in the Spirit

Given as a gift “poured out generously”… a generous gift—point of gift, free, don’t have to pay anything do anything. If I gave you a gift...

Results in Titus 3: justified by grace (exactly what Paul is talking about)... Verse also says it brings hope...how? brings hope of eternal life, justification looks to judgment seat of God, going to be pronounced NOT GUILTY, hope of eternity!

This was the Galatian’s conversion experience—reminding them of this!!

Verse 3, Important...

We are saved AND **WE GROW** by grace!!!

*“Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?”* (3)

- Talking about both initial salvation and ongoing sanctification, or being perfected.
- Saying that both salvation and sanctification are a work of the Spirit, a work of God and not of our own effort. We need to rely on God’s grace every day.

“He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.” (Php 1:6). God began the work by grace, he continues his work in us by grace!!

That is why Jesus says in John 15...stay connected to the vine, the source of growth “Remain in me, abide in me...apart from me you can do nothing.”

- **Can you identify with this struggle?** Such an easy trap to get into. Can be subtle. Can happen easily. Somewhere along the road we make it more about what we are doing for God and not about what he is doing in and through us.

- It is saying to God...
  - I read my Bible and pray each day, I give to the church and to the poor, I reach out to my friends and co-workers, I serve in the church, I am in a small group, I have lots of Christian friends and seek to do good things.
  - Furthermore, I don’t get drunk, I don’t smoke, I don’t do drugs, and I don’t sleep around. Aren’t you pleased with me!
  - **What is the problem with this?** Anything wrong with these things just mentioned? No, but... about the attitude and the motivation.
  - The core of Christianity is not about a list of do’s and don’ts, it is about a relationship! Relationship with God based on grace—from that flows service.

- **So the heart of Christian growth, sanctification** is to become more like Christ, it is to experience a vibrant relationship of grace so that God works through us to accomplish his mission!
(4-5) Paul is saying that...

- Their suffering is for nothing if they rely on the law for salvation.
- God gave them the Spirit and works in them because they believed in Christ, NOT because they follow the works of the law.
- **POINT:** God works in our lives because of our faith and belief, because we have been made his children, not because we deserve it. God grants it to us as a privilege—to use us in his work. To accomplish his work through us.
  - That’s why God says, “Trust in the Lord with all your heart” (Prov 3:5)
  - That’s why Jesus loved the faith of a little child. The dependent trust.
  - When we get to this point, child-like faith and trust, then God is ready to do something great! He will do miracles!

**THE CASE FOR GRACE: THE SCRIPTURAL ARGUMENT (6-14)**

Saying, “It’s all about faith” Two ideas here from Scripture about faith.

- Paul uses Abraham as an example—your faith is his faith.
- Paul uses the example of Jesus—he became the curse for us.

First example of “It’s all about faith” **FATHER ABRAHAM (6-9)**

6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? 7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Why is Paul using Abraham here for his argument? Why point to Abraham?

- Judaizers used Abraham in their argument for works. They used his life as an example that people must be circumcised in order to become part of the people of God. They said something like, “Hey, if our Father Abraham was circumcised, so everyone must be.” So by using Abe, Paul is turning their argument back on their heads. Paul is using Abraham as a case for faith, the very OT character the Judiazers used for their argument for works.
- Abraham was greatly respected among the Jews. He was called the Father of the Jews. Uses Abraham for credibility and respect.
- Abraham is the clearest example in the O.T. of justification by faith...
Paul points to **Genesis 15:6.** SCENE is that God came to Abraham and told him his offspring would be as numerous as the stars. And even though his wife could not have children, Abraham still trusted in the Lord, so **Gn. 15:6,** “Abraham believed the Lord, and God counted it to him as righteousness.”

Parallel passage is **Romans 4.** Adds to what we are talking about here...

- Says that God made Abraham righteous because of his faith.
- Also says that the timing is very important. God justified Abraham, made him righteous, before the command came to be circumcised.
- Abraham put his faith in God and then was circumcised.
- **Why does the timing matter?** Because it showed works/circumcision are a sign that faith is present they were never meant to be the basis of faith
- So Abraham is the father of both Jews and Gentiles because of their common faith. **Rom. 4:16** says, “He is the Father of us all.” Father of Jews through lineage/heritage and faith, Father of Gentiles through faith. Jews and Gentiles both are saved because of their faith. Abraham is Father of both, of all !!
- Point summed up well **Gal 3:7, 9, saying the same thing twice** “Those who believe are children of Abraham...those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham.”

**Galatians 3:29** helps us out here, “If you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s offspring, and heirs according to the promise.”

- **How do you belong to Christ?** By faith like Abraham. Faith in God, in Christ
- **Who are the ones that inherit God’s blessing?** All who have faith.

And so Paul says the gospel of grace by faith was announced in the OT by Abraham saying, “All nations will be blessed through you.” **Genesis 12:3.** It is also repeated in Genesis 18:18 and 22:18.

**Summing up...** Paul uses the story of Abraham... to point to justification by faith for the Gentiles—For Abraham it was about faith, not works... for you (Galatians) about faith, not works.

**Second example of “It’s all about faith”** **THE CURSE IS REVERSED (10-14)**

10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” 12 But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall 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 hanged on a tree”—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

What is going on here? Contrasting two lifestyles. Two ways of getting to God. Those who rely on the works of the law and those who rely on faith in Christ.

Verdict #1—Those who rely on works of the law: cursed!

- No one is justified/made righteous in God’s sight by doing the law. Romans 3:19-20 helps us here,

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

BAD NEWS—two reasons why it is bad...

- #1 All are under a curse by God. Not saved. Quotes Deut 27:26, “Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them. And all the people shall say, Amen” Going back to Deuteronomy
  - Section of Scripture after this verse is very telling—Deut 28
  - Sums up—listing all the blessings Israelites will receive when they obey and all the curses they will receive if they do not obey. So what happened? They did not obey God and they received many of the curses found in Deut 28. So this passage says, “all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.” Israel’s history points to this fact. We need God to do something!!
- #2 All are under God’s wrath. Rom. 4:15 “For the law brings wrath.” How does the law bring wrath?
  - One must do everything written in the law perfectly to have favor with God.
  - Is this possible? No! The law was meant to drive us to Christ, to show us our need. So...
  - Those who live under the law will experience God’s curses and wrath.
  - The Law shows us our sin. Shows us that we cannot measure up to God’s standards.
So verdict #1—those who rely on works of the law are cursed.
Verdict #2--Those who rely on faith in Christ: **righteous!**

**GOOD NEWS**
- Quotes Habakkuk 2:4 (used a lot in NT), “The righteous will live by faith”
- Those who live by faith in Christ are justified in God’s sight, righteous.
- **How is justification possible?** Only by faith in Jesus’ sacrifice!
  “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.” (13)
- **What does this mean?** Redeemed—means to buy out, to save, to purchase back.
  Illustration is buy a slave from his master in order to set him free.
- God put the curse of sin on Christ’s shoulders, he bore the wrath, he took the sin.
- By doing this, God was buying us back from slavery and setting us free!
- **What are the results of this redemption?** Paul points out two things:
  1. We are blessed!! The blessing given to Abraham in the OT, “all nations will be blessed through you.” could be given to the Gentiles because of faith in Jesus Christ. Same faith as Abraham.
  2. We have the Spirit!! The Spirit can be given to all believers. Announced in OT and has become a reality through Christ—“I will put my Spirit inside your hearts and move you to obey.” Jer 31. Spirit is the one who enables us to follow God!!

Put it Together, The Big Idea

*Our faith begins and grows by grace through the Spirit*

**Truths for Life**
- We are saved and we grow by grace, not by performance.
  - Performance mentality brings guilt/insecurity... stay connected to vine!!
  - Everything we do, all our disciplines only because of God’s grace.
- God is gracious to work in and through us.
  - He doesn’t need us, but he uses us as a loving Father.
  - When we get to the place of trusting in God with all our hearts, he will do a great work.
- It is all about faith!

- Those who rely on faith in Christ are redeemed and righteous.
  - Gives great humility and appreciation—freed from slavery!
Application—so what do we do if we have fallen into rule-keeping, performance?

- Embrace God’s love.

  *I have been crucified with Christ. It is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.*
  *And the life I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.*  
  *Galatians 2:20*

  - Jesus is passionate about you.
  - Jesus has paid a price for you.
  - God’s pleasure in you is not based upon your performance for Him.
  - God’s pleasure in you is based upon Christ’s performance for you.  
  (Platt)

For the Group—Put it into Action!

1. What stands out to you from this section of Scripture or from this talk? Why?
2. We have said that, “it is all about faith!” Where in your life do you need to exercise faith? Are there areas where God is calling you to trust him? Share.
3. The passage says that Christ redeemed us by becoming a curse in our place. What are the implications of being redeemed by God? How should this truth affect our daily lives?
4. Pray for one another.