THE PROMISE OF FAITH

**DATE: 8/5/2015 Wed.**

**TEXT: Galatians 3:15-25**

**INTRODUCTION**

In review of chapter 3, we have seen so far …

-- That the Law would not provide the Spirit – **vs. 1-5**

-- Could not give the righteousness of God – **vs. 6-9**

-- We saw, the Law brought a curse – **vs. 10-13**

-- Could not give the blessing **– v.14**

In the remaining verses of chapter 3,

Paul continued to prove the superiority of the Life of Faith, to that of Legalism

In this next passage, Paul anticipates the Legalists next move /objective

*Yes,* (They would say) *Abraham and all his descendants, prior to Sinai, were saved by Faith … because there was no Law*

*… But then, God gave Moses the Law.*

*So after the Law was given, it was necessary to realize that God was instituting a new means of Salvation*

*Why else would God have given the Law if it were not for Salvation?*

What are the Purposes of Grace and the Law?

Paul gives us 3 arguments to answer this question

Let’s stand to read God’s Word and then we will pray

And think on this thought tonight

***“The Promise of Faith”***

Read **vs. 15-25**

***~~~Prayer~~~***

**I. THE “RELIABILITY OF THE COVENANT” – vs. 15-18**

Here Paul references the Covenant God made with Abraham

Specifically, how reliable it was, and how it was fulfilled by Christ

What is a Covenant?

By definition, it is a solemn agreement that is binding on all parties

The illustration here is that when a contract or agreement is made …

No one party can add to it, or take from it, arbitrarily

It is to remain, as it was originally agreed upon

But, that is Not, how people operate today!

They do as they please, without regard for others

The Bible has a lot to say about people who break covenants (and it’s not good!)

(Both of these next verses deal with attitudes today)

**Romans 1:31 –** ***“Without understanding, covenantbreakers, without natural affection, implacable, unmerciful:”***

**II Timothy 3:3 – *“Without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good,”***

The Bible reveals 2 Types of Covenants

Conditional & Unconditional

The major covenants were unconditional

-- Abrahamic – **Genesis 12**

-- Land – **Deuteronomy 30**

-- Davidic – **II Samuel 7**

-- New – **Jeremiah 31**

In these, God simply promised that He would fulfill His pledge regardless of the obedience or disobedience of the other party

These unconditional covenants had their source in divine grace and were appropriated by faith

Whereas the Mosaic Covenant (The Law) required obedience for fulfillment

**Exodus 19:5 –** ***“Now therefore, if ye will obey my voice indeed, and keep my covenant, then ye shall be a peculiar treasure unto Me above all people: for all the earth is Mine”***

In order for God to do His part, Israel had to do its part

Thus the Law was legalistic and conditional

**A. God’s Covenant ‘Illustrated’ – v.15**

**1.** The Illustration

**v.15a - *“Brethren, I speak after the manner of men; Though it be but a man's covenant,***

The phrase ***–“after the manner of men”*** refers to a commonplace practice

It points out how things are governed by society

Paul is saying that even men attempt to be honorable

Within courts of law a covenant agreed to, and signed by both parties, cannot be changed later by the will of only one participant

The agreement of both parties is binding

These men must respect the legal requirements of such a contract – ***“a man's covenant”***

Quite often a person may orally agree to a contract, shake hands on it, and later back out of it

Once the contract has been signed (***“confirmed”***),

It requires both parties to maintain their respective part of the bargain

If contracts could be broken easily, the worlds of business and politics would be full of chaos

So in the first part of this verse we see that men make covenants

**2.** The Importance

**v.15b - *“…yet if it be confirmed, no man disannulleth, or addeth thereto”***

If men honor covenants made between themselves

Then how much more will God honor His Word when He makes a Covenant?

The testimony of God is that He cannot lie and that He is immutable

Therefore what He promises will not falter or be changed!

So we see the Reliability of God’s Covenant Illustrated

Now let’s look at the Reliability of …

**B. God’s Covenant ‘Given’ – v.16**

**1.** The Abrahamic Covenant was ‘Unconditional’

**v. 16a -** ***“Now to Abraham and his seed were the promises made”***

When God gave Abraham His Covenant, He swore by His own Name

**Hebrews 6:17-19 …**

**v.18** defines ***“immutable”***

God simply promised that He would fulfill His pledge regardless of the obedience or disobedience of the other party

These unconditional covenants had their source in divine grace and were appropriated by faith

To ANYONE … who would come by Faith

**2.** The Abrahamic Covenant was ‘Specific’

**v.16b - *“He saith not, And to seeds, as of many; but as of one, And to thy seed, which is Christ”***

When God gave Abraham His Covenant, It was Specific

As it was when God gave the first Promise of the Messiah (to Adam and Eve)

**Genesis 3:15 *– “And I will put enmity between thee (Satan) and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel”***

Whether before or after Christ came to earth

Salvation has always been provided only through the perfect offering of Christ on the cross

Believers who lived before the cross and never knew the specifics about Jesus were nevertheless forgiven and made right with God by Faith in anticipation of Christ’s sacrifice based on **Genesis 3:15** and others

**v.8 – *“And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed”***

Whereas believers who have lived after the cross are saved by looking back to it

**God’s Covenant ‘Illustrated’ – v.15**

**God’s Covenant ‘Given’ – v.16**

**C. God’s Covenant ‘Confirmed’ – v.17, 18**

**1.** The Law Did not Void the Covenant

**v.17 - *“And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, (Abrahamic) the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect”***

It was 430 years after God's promise to Abraham that He gave the Law to Moses

Paul argues that the Law did not change or make void in any way God's Covenant with Abraham

The Law could not and did not change God's covenant with Abraham

God gave Abraham His Word and that is unchangeable

**Titus 1:2 – *“In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;”***

**2.** The Law Cannot Change the Inheritance

**v.18 - *“For if the inheritance be of the law, it is no more of promise: but God gave it to Abraham by promise”***

The ***“inheritance”*** refers to the promised blessings of the Abrahamic Covenant

**v. 8c - *“that in him all the nations of the earth would be blessed”***

If the promise had been conditional on keeping the Law, then it would no longer be a promise

The Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional

Keeping the Law requires man's effort

And is therefore conditional

If he does well he has earned the reward

However, God's promise to Abraham was given on the basis of grace alone

Paul's argument is that if there is any mixture of Law and Grace or Faith and Works, then it is no more of Grace

**THE “RELIABILITY OF THE COVENANT”**

**II. THE “REASON FOR THE LAW” – vs. 19-22a**

Paul uses a rhetorical question in the first part of **v.19**

***“Wherefore then serveth the law?”***

So if the Covenant to Abraham could never be annulled or replaced …

Why then did God give the Law to Moses?

Over 3000 years ago the Law was given to Moses by God upon Mount Sinai

These Commandants provide the structure for a moral society

These Laws establish boundaries and clearly define the limits within which man is to live as commanded by God

These great Commandments teach us of our inability to perfectly obey God, that we are sinners, and unable to please God in the power of our flesh, thereby, bringing us to a saving knowledge and faith in Jesus Christ

Sometimes believers have the tendency to ignore the Law as something that is done and over with

We often hear folks say something like this …

*“We are not under the law, but under grace”*

I understand that we are not bound to ceremonial law

However, the Moral Law of God is absolute for all ages and all people

Even as New Testament Christians, we need to understand that the Law is not something to be detested, but something to delight in

**Psalm 1:2 *– “But his delight is in the Law of the LORD; and in His law doth he meditate day and night”***

**Psalm 119:97 – *“O how love I Thy Law! it is my meditation all the day”***

**Psalm 119:165 –** ***“Great peace have they which love Thy Law: and nothing shall offend them”***

**I Timothy 1:8-10 – *“But we know that the Law is good, if a man use it lawfully;” “Knowing this, that the Law is not made for a righteous man, but for the lawless and disobedient, for the ungodly and for sinners, for unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers,” “For whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for menstealers, for liars, for perjured persons, and if there be any other thing that is contrary to sound doctrine;”***

The Question remains - ***“Wherefore then serveth the law?”***

Let’s try to answer that question

**A. To Reveal ‘Man’s Need’** (3 thoughts here)

 **1.** The Law shows our Transgressions **– v.19b**

Paul answers – ***“It was added because of transgressions”***

It is through the Law that the awareness of sin comes

The Law was given to show men that they are hopelessly sinful and in need of God's help

**Romans 7:7, 8 –** *“****I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet”***

Paul is saying, I wouldn't have known what sin was if the Law hadn't revealed it to me

*“****But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead”***

***“Concupiscence”*** is *a lust for that which is carnal and unlawful*

Paul knew what lust was, and that it is sinful because the Law said – *“****Thou shalt not covet”***

The idea here is that the Law exposed his sin of lust

**Lust** is untamed Desire

**Romans 5:20 –** *“****Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound...”***

We could never understand what sin is unless we have some standard to judge by

The Law is that standard

Without the Law there is no definition of sin

Without God's commandments there can be no transgression

**James 1:23, 24** speaks of the Law as a mirror that reflects man's sinful condition

The Law is God's standard of righteousness that enables us to distinguish between good and evil

Therefore, the Law shows man what he is—a sinner!

**2.** The Law cannot Bring Life **– v. 21**

***“Is the law then against the promises of God? God forbid: for if there had been a law given which could have given life,(?) verily righteousness should have been by the law”***

Paul deals with another objection that might have been raised by the Legalist

If what Paul has been saying is true, doesn't that mean that Law and Grace contradict one another?

Paul answers – ***“God forbid...”***

The phrase is a strong negative expression and carries the idea of *an absolute impossibility*

The idea is that there is no basis whatsoever for such foolish thinking

***“... for if there had been a law given which could have given life, verily righteousness should have been by the law”*** (rhetorical)

Paul stresses the fact that the Law was never intended to give eternal life

If, somehow, a man could perfectly obeyed and kept the Law, he could have been saved on the basis of perfect obedience to it

However, no man can perfectly keep the Law

And to transgress in just one point is to be guilty of the whole

**James 2:10** said***– “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all”***

The Law demands perfect obedience and therefore cannot result in eternal life

There is nothing wrong with the Law

The problem is with man / he can't obey it

**3.** The Law Condemns All Men **– v.22a**

***“But the scripture hath concluded all under sin,”***

The word *“****concluded”*** means *to shut in, to include, to enclose, to shut up*

The idea is that of being shut up and hemmed in on all sides

Paul used a similar expression in the Book of Romans

**Romans 7:6 – *“But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter”***

Paul says – *“****But now”***

That is, now that we are saved, we have been …

*“****delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held”***

The word *“****held”*** speaks of being *seized or retained*

That was our relationship to the Law

We were hopelessly held as a prisoner

No matter how hard we tried to obtain righteousness,

The flesh kept driving us to sin and the Law continued to condemn

The Law could not set us free

It could only show us our sinfulness, pronounce us guilty, and condemn us to death

Apart from Christ everyone is in the same fix

*“****All”*** are sinners and the sinner is hemmed in by his sin and on top of that the Law has pronounced him guilty and holds him as a prisoner

There are no exceptions

**Romans 3:10 –** *“****There is none righteous, no, not one”***

No man has ever satisfied the righteous demands of the Law (except Christ)

We can attempt, but we will fail

No matter how hard we try or even how far we get,

We still come up short

**Romans 3:23 – *“For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God”***

Solomon summed it up in **Ecclesiastes 7:20**

When he said **– *“For there is not a just man upon earth, that doeth good, and sinneth not”***

***“Wherefore then serveth the law?”***

**To Reveal ‘Man’s Need’**

The Law was Given …

**B. To Reveal ‘God’s Grace’ – vs. 19, 20**

Let’s quickly jump back to these verses

The Mosaic Law was made between God and man

Moses was the Mediator

**v.19d - *“… and it (Law) was ordained by angels in the hand of a mediator”***

**v. 20 - *“Now a mediator is not a mediator of one, but God is one”***

A mediator represents two parties, not just one

This procedure is absolutely essential in the ratification of a conditional covenant between two differing interests

But the Abrahamic Covenant was unconditional and needed no mediator

It depends solely upon God – ***“but God is one”***

Therefore, the Law was a temporary necessity until Jesus

**v.19c - *“…till the seed should come to whom the promise was made;”***

The Promise ***“seed”*** of **Genesis 3:15**

The Law’s sole purpose was a Demonstration of God’s Grace

To teach us what sin is, so we will see our need for a Saviour!

**THE “RELIABILITY OF THE COVENANT”**

**THE “REASON FOR THE LAW”**

**III. THE “RECEPTION OF SALVATION” – vs. 22b -25**

**A. The Law Prepares Men – vs. 22b**

The Purpose for the Law is seen in the word ***“that”***

***“…that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe”***

When sinners stop trying to save themselves and start trusting in Christ to save them,

The Law has fulfilled its purpose in their lives

What the Law was unable to give because of the inability of man

God is able to give because of the power of the crucified, resurrected Christ

The promise is given ***“to them that believe”***

Not to them that work

**Romans 4:5 *– “But to him that worketh not, but believeth on Him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness”***

**B. The Law was a Guard – v. 23**

***“But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed”***

The Law was a prison for man

The word ***“kept”*** here means *to be guarded by military personal*

It has the idea of being under lock and key

**Acts 12:5, 6** – ***“Peter therefore was kept in prison:” “Peter was sleeping between two soldiers, bound with two chains: and the keepers before the door kept the prison”***

Anyone that is kept in prison does not want to stay there

When someone comes to the end of himself

Realizing the futility of trying to keep the Law to please God for Salvation

They are ready to Receive God’s means of Salvation

Faith in Christ

In these last 2 verses of our text

Paul reiterates one more Purpose of the Law

But in relation to Saving Faith

**C. The Law was a Schoolmaster – vs. 24, 25**

**1.** The Pointing of Faith

**v. 24 - *“Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster to bring us unto Christ, …***

***… that we might be justified by faith”***

Noah Webster defines a schoolmaster as - *The man who presides over and teaches a school; a teacher, instructor or principal of a school*

In Paul's day the schoolmaster was a servant

… who had been given the responsibility of seeing that his Master's children were properly trained and educated

Paul lifts the work of a schoolmaster out of the culture of his day and uses it as an illustration of the Law's relationship to Christ and sinner

The Law reveals

-- The holy and righteous character of God

-- The sinfulness and depravity of man

-- The need for a Saviour, and then points us to that Saviour

In other words, the Law was designed to teach man his sinfulness and inadequacy to satisfy a Holy God

Thus, causing him to trust in Christ and be justified by faith

**2.** The Purview of the Law

**v. 25 - *“But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster”***

Therefore, because Christ has been offered, the purpose of the Law is no longer needed

**CONCLUSION**

Once we place our Faith in Christ, there is no need for a Guardian or Schoolmaster

We can come Face to Face with God through Christ

The vial has been rent

**Hebrews 4:16 – *“Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need”***

**Hebrews 13:6 – *“So that we may boldly say, The Lord is my helper, and I will not fear what man shall do unto me”***

**THE “RELIABILITY OF THE COVENANT”**

**THE “REASON FOR THE LAW”**

**THE “RECEPTION OF SALVATION”**