

# Galatians: Freedom through Christ – Part 6

## The Law and the Promise – Galatians 3:15-29

Crosspoint – Rick Bovell – Oct. 19<sup>th</sup>, 2025

Children are free to go to their classes.

### Introduction

- Jesus + Anything is a negative (illustration)
  - Because we know (of) Jesus and insult Him by thinking anything else is needed we insult Him and attempt to take His glory for ourselves. This is high treason
- We've heard this equation for weeks, but how might the Jews who came from Jerusalem have replied? They might say, "God created the Law! How is it that something given by God should just be cast off?" You may be wondering the same thing.
- The fact is that our society is a (supposed) meritocracy. This means that we expect those with the best skills and intellect to be promoted to the best positions. We get upset at what we call nepotism – someone gets the position, not because of their skill, but because of their relationship with someone in a position of power.
- The bad news is that if you believe that your skill and your intelligence and your goodness will get you a good position in heaven then you are sadly mistaken. Jesus told the people with the highest merit that the doors would be closed to them. There is no meritocracy in heaven.  
The good news is if you know that you are completely undeserving and there is no way for you to get to God on your own that you can have a friend in Jesus. If you run to him and hold on to him as a drowning man holds on to a life preserver, then because of that relationship you get to sit on His throne and be a child of His Father. In the heavenly economy it's not what you know (or what you do), it's who you know.
- **Read Galatians 3:15-29 (Page 1003)**

### Sermon In A Sentence

**The purpose of the Law is not for us to obtain the inheritance, but to show us our need for the One who, through the Promise, has obtained the inheritance for us.**

(mini) **It is not for us to obtain the inheritance; Christ has obtained the inheritance for us.**

### What is the inheritance?

- Blessing to the earth (Gen. 12:5): You will be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation....” Ex. 19:6
- Land: Canaan (Gen. 12:7), “Blessed are the meek, for they shall inherit the earth. (Matt. 5:5)
- All things: [A]ll things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, (1 Cor. 3:21b–22)

- The kingdom of God: Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. (Matt. 5:3, 10)
- Eternal life (John 3:16)
- Paul, Peter and the writer to the Hebrews all speak of the inheritance. There is so much more to the inheritance than Abraham could know.
- In Gen 15:5-18, the God who cannot lie not only promised Abraham, but also made a covenant with Abraham that the inheritance would be given to his offspring.

## 1 The Promise of inheritance is made to Christ (15-18)

### 1.1 The promise of the inheritance is not voided by the law

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:15,17-19*
  - **<sup>15</sup> Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case.**
  - <sup>17</sup> What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.**
- *1.1.1 A contract cannot be added to after it has been ratified*
  - Today and in ancient Rome contract modification was not possible unless both parties agreed to the change. Paul says the law was introduced 430 years later. At that point, Abraham was dead and therefore the contract could not be modified.
  - The inheritance of land and blessing for Abraham could not, therefore, depend on the execution of the law. It was promised by God and covenanted by God – His promise still stands.

### 1.2 The promise was made to Christ

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:16*
  - **<sup>16</sup> The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.**
- *1.2.1 When God made the promise to Abraham, He already had Christ in mind as the one to whom and through whom the promise would be provided.*
  - When we consider that the extent of the inheritance was more than just a plot of ground, but an eternal kingdom; that it was more than just lots of children but transforming those children into a holy nation for God; the person to whom the inheritance came could not be an ordinary sinful person. It had to be someone who

could rule an eternal kingdom, and one whose life could be the basis of transforming the sinful peoples into sons of God. – Only God could do this.

- God had God in mind when he made the promise.

## 2 The Law shows our need for Christ (19-25)

### 2.1 The law was needed because people are lawless

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:19a*
  - <sup>19a</sup> **Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions....**
- *2.1.1 Laws and rules are for lawbreakers*
  - **Illustration:** Classroom rules – Children need rules because they naturally misbehave
- *2.2.2 Abraham and his children were horrid*
  - Abraham, his son Issac, his son Jacob, and his 12 sons, looked more like characters out of a bad soap opera than people who should be recipients of God's promises. They were a sinful lot (just as we are).
  - God desired children who would look like residents of His kingdom, so he drew up the rules to help them to see what that entailed.
  - Did God believe that they would follow the law? No! Both Moses and Joshua told the people,  
Moses: <sup>4</sup> But to this day the LORD has not given you a heart to understand or eyes to see or ears to hear. (Deut. 29:4 ESV)  
Joshua: <sup>19</sup> But Joshua said to the people, "You are not able to serve the LORD, for he is a holy God. He is a jealous God; he will not forgive your transgressions or your sins. (Josh. 24:19 ESV)

### 2.2 The requirements of the law are fulfilled by a mediator – the God-man

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:19b-25*
  - <sup>19b</sup> ... **until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. <sup>20</sup> A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one.**  
<sup>21</sup> **Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. <sup>22</sup> But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.**  
<sup>23</sup> **Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. <sup>24</sup> So the law was our**

***guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.***

- ***2.2.1 The law was meant to be temporary***

- Note that word “until.” The law was not meant to be a permanent fixture. We were not meant to be locked up under it because of our sin forever. It was there “until” the one who didn’t need the law came. Jeremiah prophesied 600 years before Jesus that the new covenant people would have the law in them and that it would be written on their hearts. Jesus is the first of a long line of those who have no need of an external law because their internal desire and drive is to do more than the law prescribed.
- The law was minimal pointers to what the love of God and love of neighbor should look like. As Jesus did love God and love man (to the death) the written law was like commanding a healthy person to breathe – completely unnecessary.

- ***2.2.2 Laws and rules are not for those who have them written on their hearts***

- **Illustrations:** Classroom rules & Classroom rules for adults – it just doesn’t fit!
- By faith in Christ who lived to fulfill the requirements of the law, and died and rose to pay for our sin and provide his righteousness to us we now live by grace and our new standard is the Law of Love:
  - Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind and with all your strength.’ And ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ (Mark 12:30-31)
- The law says “Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy.” (ESV Exodus 20:8)
- The law of love says “How lovely is your dwelling place, O LORD of hosts! My soul longs, yes, faints for the courts of the LORD; my heart and flesh sing for joy to the living God.” (Psalm 84:1-2 ESV)
- The law says “You shall not curse the deaf or put a stumbling block before the blind, but you shall fear your God: I am the LORD.” (Leviticus 19:14 ESV)
- The law of love says “You shall push your husband out of the way to get your blind friend, Alicia, to the door safely.” (Michele 10/12/25 Crosspoint Church)
- The standard of love is higher, deeper and wider. It’s no longer the bare minimum.
- Matthew 5:20-22  
For I tell you, unless your righteousness exceeds that of the scribes and Pharisees, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. “You have heard that it was said to those of old, ‘You shall not murder; and whoever murders will be liable to judgment.’ But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment; whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council; and whoever says, ‘You fool!’ will be liable to the hell of fire. (ESV)

- ***2.2.3 When we find we are not living according to the Law of Love we again run to Jesus***

- Until we see his face, we will find areas in our lives in which we are not living according to the higher law that should be written on our hearts. Our desires are

changing if we are in Him, but it is a process. When we find faults in our desires we must not run to the mirror to condemn ourselves but run to Christ for forgiveness, strength, and renewal of our hearts and minds.

- The point of the Law of Love is not to substitute a new law, but to recognize the higher, impossible standard of God that is being written on our hearts. But it reminds us more starkly of the necessity of running to Jesus.
- If we say we have no sin, we are liars and the truth is not in us. None of us have it down! Instead of wasting time beating ourselves up, we must run to Christ moment by moment proclaiming “I need Thee, I need Thee; ev’ry hour I need Thee; O bless me now, my Savior, I come to Thee.”
- Run to Jesus when:
  - I realize that I am more focused on doing what I want than obeying my parents that God has given to love and protect me.
  - I realize that I have been implicitly or explicitly telling my child that being a Christian is more about obeying rules than following Jesus.
  - I say nothing when people use the name of my Lord and God as a curse word when I know I would be irate if they did the same to the name of my parent, spouse or child.
  - I allow fear of tomorrow to control my life instead of faith in Christ, especially when I know that He commanded me to be anxious for nothing.
  - I run from those whose lifestyle I dislike instead of taking the opportunity to love them to Christ.
  - I support lifestyles that are contrary to God because it is easier to lie than to live with the conflict that comes with the truth.
  - I see no bad decisions that my political party has made and no good ones the other has made – this causes me to recognize that I am more formed by media than by the Messiah.
  - It is easier for me to be in relationship with a pagan from my political party than a lover of Christ from the opposing party.
  - It’s easier for me to use my money for things that are temporary than for things eternal.
  - I find more rest in scrolling through the latest videos on social media than I do in God’s word.

### 3 We are children and heirs through Christ (26-29)

#### 3.1 Faith in Christ makes us children of God

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:26-27*

- **<sup>26</sup> So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, <sup>27</sup> for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.**

- *3.1.1 Being baptized identifies us with Christ's death and resurrection*
  - We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life. (Rom 6:4 ESV)
  - ...having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead. (Col. 2:12 ESV)
- *3.1.2 Jesus is in us and covers us*
  - We are children of God because we are clothed with Christ, when God sees us, he sees the beauty of His son on us. But we also note that “it is no longer I who live, but Christ who lives in me.” (Gal. 2:20) We are united with Christ and if we are united with the Son, then we are children of the Father.
  - Jesus says this Himself:  
...I am in my Father, and you in me, and I in you. (John 14:20 ESV)  
Abide in me, and I in you. (John 15:4 ESV)

## 3.2 Faith in Christ unifies us as children of Abraham and co-heirs

- *Scripture – Galatians 3:28-29*
  - **<sup>28</sup> There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.**
- *3.2.1 In Christ we have become a new unified ethnicity that overshadows the identities that separated us*
  - Our distinctions are maintained, but the bond that we have in Jesus, draws us together no matter what tries to separate us.
  - Magnet illustration – magnets try to repel each other, but a greater power pushes them together.
  - In our current climate the distinction of Jew and Gentile, slave and free, or male and female pales when compared to the distinctions between political parted. If we truly can say that there at Crosspoint “There is neither Democrat nor Republican, for you are all one in Christ Jesus” then we have truly shown our culture the power of the love of our God.
- *3.2.2 In Christ we are Abraham's children and heirs of the promised inheritance*
  - Just as we are God's children because we are related to Christ, so we are Abraham's offspring. Therefore, all that was intended for Abraham and his seed are ours.
  - Everything that was promised to Abraham, the things that he understood, and the things that God had in mind of which he had no clue are ours in Christ.
  - Today:
    - The world will be blessed through our lives

- We are seated in heavenly places with Christ
- We have eternal life
- The law is being written on our hearts (our desires are aligning with His)
- All things are ours
- Etc.
- Tomorrow:
  - We will see Jesus face to face
  - We will dwell in the house of the Lord forever
  - Each of our tears will be dried
  - We will have new bodies like that of Christ
  - We will sit with Christ at His wedding feast
  - Etc.

## Conclusion

The purpose of the Law is not for us to obtain the inheritance, but to show us our need for the One who, through the Promise, has obtained the inheritance for us.

(mini) It is not for us to obtain the inheritance; Christ has obtained the inheritance for us.

Jesus is the be all and end all for the great inheritance that we have. We should NEVER think that we are good enough or that we have done this long enough that we can do this on our own. That is the most dangerous place to be. Make a practice of running to Jesus all day every day.

## Questions for Growth Groups

1. Consider the scriptures for meditation below. What do they tell you about what God truly wants and the ability of the Mosaic law to provide it?
2. Paul claims that the promise was made to Christ. Can you think of any OT scriptures to support his case?
3. What is the purpose of a mediator? Paul does not explicitly say it was Christ. What reasons are some reasons to believe it is Christ? Are there reasons to believe otherwise?
4. Why is it not just good enough to try to live according to the law of love? What would doing so say about Christ?
5. Christianity is about who you know and not what you know. Does this make Christianity exclusive? What problems do you have with that? What joys do you have?
6. What are the struggles that you face that make you run to Christ?

## Appendix

<b>Law (A Person's work)</b>	<b>Promise (God's work)</b>
Temporary	Eternal
Binding (Curse)	Freeing (Grace)
Cuts against a person's natural desire	Conforms a person's desire to God's will
Established to show what is in a person's heart and their need for God's grace	Established to show God's love for people and his grace toward them

The promise was:

- Made by God (The Father)
- Made to God (The Son)
- Mediated by God (The Son)
- Measured out by God (The Spirit)

Scriptures to meditate on

- <sup>5</sup> Now therefore, if you will indeed obey my voice and keep my covenant, you shall be my treasured possession among all peoples, for all the earth is mine; <sup>6</sup> and you shall be to me a kingdom of priests and a holy nation.' These are the words that you shall speak to the people of Israel." (Ex. 19:5–6 ESV)
- <sup>33</sup> For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the LORD: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Jer. 31:33 ESV)