

## **A Man on a Mission**

(Galatians 3:1-18)

(preached 8/14/16; Sunday AM)

### **Introduction**

You may not know the name Eugene Polley, but all of you really appreciate him...

Eugene Polley was the man who invented the first wireless remote control for TVs in 1955...

Mr Polley went to work for Zenith as a stock boy during the Great Depression and eventually became an engineer for Zenith, working there for 47 years..

He is credited with 18 patents in his time with the company, but the most important one was the wireless remote control...

When I was a kid, a remote control was a luxury item, but today they are standard with every TV...

I don't even know if you can buy a TV today without a remote control...

My grandad called it the clicker because older remotes used to make a clicking sound to change the channel...

Today, they are quiet and smaller and come with the cheapest of TVs...

If you think about it, it would be so weird to tell someone today to go change the channel for you...

Thought that used to be a regular order from Mom and Dad to the kids...

However, that all changed in the early 80s as remotes become less expensive to make...

However, my grandfather complained about the cost anyway, but once he had a TV with a remote, he never went back to the ones with a knob...

TV remotes were one of the things in life that if you ever got, you would never consider going back to life before you had it...

Though some people still like the look or feel of something, most of us love convenience....

And once we have it, we always want it...

Think about rotary phones or mobile phones or flat screen TVs....

Now, the Galatians were not like us in that regard.

Because the Galatians were a people who were shown a better way to do something, but were refusing the new better way to return to the old way of living...

You see, the people in the Galatian churches had heard the good news...

That a man is made right with God through faith alone in Jesus Christ alone...

They had been preached to by Paul that good works are not the way to salvation...

They had seen the glory and the simplicity of salvation that comes through faith in Jesus Christ...

But were turning in their remote control TVs and going back to the ones with knobs....

Because they were leaving the gospel of grace through faith and returning to a false gospel that said you had to work your way to god by keeping the Law...

They were turning in their push button phones and going back to the rotary phones....

They were rejecting the simple and beautiful gospel and going back to a way of life that was ugly and complicated...

Where a person had to keep 613 laws perfectly in order to be saved...

They were rejecting the grace of God seen in Jesus Christ dying on a cross in their place as their Substitute and they were putting their eyes on being right with God by perfect obedience to the Law...

It is no wonder that Paul begins chapter 3 by saying...

“You foolish Galatians!”

What in the world are you thinking?

Why are you trading in your faith and freedom in Christ to put back on the burden of the Law?

You should know better...

And he is going to try and convince them of that in chapter 3 and in chapter 4...

For 2 chapters, he has tried to convince them that the gospel of grace that he preached was the real gospel by defending his credentials and authority to preach it....

But in chapters 3-4, he turns his why the gospel of works is faulty...

In other words, Paul is going to tell the Galatians why they need to keep the remote controlled TV....

And it is not just because he says so, there are also reasons why the old knobbed TVs aren't that good...

So, for 18 verses today, we are be given three reasons why the gospel of works is wrong....

These aren't the only reasons but they are three good reasons....

Now, remember the gospel of grace says that a man or woman is made right with God by faith in Jesus Christ alone apart from any good works...

The gospel of works that was preached by the false teachers in Galatia and by false teachers today says this....

We love Jesus, but He needs a little boost in order to get you to heaven...

So believe in Him but add your obedience to the law and then you will be fit for heaven...

And though the gospel of works doesn't deny Jesus Christ, it is a false gospel because it adds to him and makes him look incapable of saving on His own...

But there are other problems with the gospel of works as well....

So, let's get into them this morning....

The first problem with the gospel of works is that it denies God's Work...

## **I. The Gospel of Works Denies God's Work (1-5)**

Let's read verses 1-5 of Galatians chapter 3...

*3 [a]You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? 2 This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of [b]the Law, or by [c]hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun [d]by the Spirit, are you now [e]being perfected by the flesh? 4 Did you [f]suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works [g]miracles among you, do it by the works of [h]the Law, or by [i]hearing with faith?*

Paul gets a little wordy here because he is clearly worked up and frustrated with the Galatians....

But the question he is asking is this....

Galatians, you claimed to be saved.

So, how did that happen?

Were you saved because you finally kept the law perfectly one day after all those years of failing?

Were you saved because you finally followed the Sabbath law perfectly?

Were you saved because you finally followed followed the diet laws of the OT?

In other words, did obedience to the law of God get you over the hump of being saved?

Did you finally get all your good works in order and then God saw your good works and saved you?

Now, the clear answer to all the questions is clearly no..

The Galatians knew that wasn't true...

They had heard the gospel of grace preached to them by Paul...

Paul even reminds them in verse 1 that he had preached Jesus crucified so clearly to them that it was like Jesus was on the cross right before their eyes..

In other words, they knew that the gospel was not a gospel of works but a gospel that was focused on the death of Jesus Christ on their behalf...

The cross was the center of the gospel...

The truth of the cross and their belief in it was what had led to their salvation....



The Galatians had embraced the cross when they were saved....

They had not embraced their good works or their obedience to the law when they were saved....

Like the song says...

Nothing in my hands do I bring;  
Simply to the cross I cling.

The Galatians had started out believing that but now they were trading in the cross for the works of their hands....

So, Paul is clearly upset and he is simply making the point in verses 1-5....

If the cross was enough to save you, why aren't you believing that it is enough to keep you saved...

To put it in our language, Paul's point is this...

You need to dance with the one who brought you...

Don't get to the dance and then abandon your reason for getting in...

If you believe that your faith in Christ saved you, then your need to believe that your faith in Christ will be enough to keep you saved and lead you to heaven...

Here is the truth that the Galatians needed to hear and you need to hear this morning....

When God saves someone on the basis of their faith in His Son, it is enough to save completely and forever...

It is like going to the best steakhouse in the world that has the best reputation for the best steak and then getting that steak and covering it in pepper and salt and dunking it in ketchup...

If it is known for being the best steak in the world, eat it as it is presented to you...

To try and add to that steak is to insult the chef...

And to add to the gospel of God by trusting in your good work and obedience to the law is an insult to the gospel of grace that God designed and delivered to the world...

How can you possibly improve the perfect plan of salvation that came from the mind of God?

You can't and it is hopeless to try...

God has said all throughout the Bible....

Salvation comes to all who repent and put their faith in Christ...

It is truly the simplest plan of salvation you could ever imagine, but sometimes simple aint enough for some people....

And it wasn't for the Galatians....

God had done a great work to save them, but the gospel of works simply says that God didn't do enough....

So man needed to add his obedience to the law to finish it...

What an insult to Paul who had taught them better, and what an insult to God who had shown much mercy to save them....

And let me add something here....

When we add our our little rules to what it means to be saved, we are no different than the Galatians...

Let me tell you this morning....

If you want to be saved, repent of your sin and put your trust in the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ....

And God will save you....

You don't have to jump through rings of fire to be saved....

You don't have to have perfect church attendance...

You don't have to read all the Bible today....

You don't even have to have your life in perfect order...

God will work out those things through His Spirit that will come to indwell you...

The simple and glorious gospel has come to your ears today just like it did to the Galatians 1000s of years ago...

And it simply says that salvation is available to anyone today who will turn for their sin and trust fully in Jesus Christ....

There are no good works requirements....

You don't have to present a certificate of how well you have followed the 10 commandments....

Just turn from your sinful lifestyle and believe in Christ, and your soul will pass from death to life, and God will begin to produce good works in you...

The Galatians had watched God do that work in saving them, but now they were nullifying his work by trying to add to his work with their works...

That is the danger of the gospel of works...

It takes away from the perfect work of God when he saves the soul of someone who simply trusts in Him by faith...

But that's not the only problem with the gospel of works, number two....

## **II. The Gospel of Works Denies God's Word (6-14)**

In verses 6-14, Paul takes the Galatians to the OT to show that good works and obedience to the law never saved anyone...

Instead, salvation has always been by faith in God...

And so Paul takes the Galatians to the woodshed by taking them to the story of Abraham in verse 6-9...

Verse 6...

***6 [j]Even so Abraham believed God, and it was reckoned to him as righteousness. 7 Therefore, [k]be sure that it is those who are of faith who are sons of Abraham. 8 The Scripture, foreseeing that God [l]would justify the [m]Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with [n]Abraham, the believer.***

The importance of what Paul says here is lost on us because we didn't grow up as Jews....

And Jews loved their laws and their good works....

And they also loved their forefathers especially Abraham who was the first Jew ever...

And Paul knowing their love of Abraham goes straight to him to prove his point that the gospel of works never saved anyone, not even Abraham...

This would have gotten the Galatians attention because many of the Galatians were Jews, who had come out of Judaism to see Jesus as the Messiah...

But they still adored Abraham as the father of their nation and their people..

They certainly believed that Abraham was saved and was with God...

But Paul points to how Abraham was saved...

Now, here is the key piece of information about Abraham that you need to know to get the point here...

Abraham was saved before God even gave his law to Israel...

Moses would come years later with the law, and so if keeping the law was what saved a person, Abraham or anyone before the law had no chance...

Yet, keeping the law has never saved anyone...

I hear Christians say all the time...

Well, OT people were saved by obeying God's law but NT people are saved by grace...

No, No, No...

Everyone who has ever been saved from Adam and Eve to 2016 has been saved by their faith in God...

And Abraham was a great example....

WE don't have time to go back to the entire story of Abraham's life, but here is the 2 minute version...

God came to Abraham and told Abraham to follow him and he would make his name great and give him a land and give him descendants and bless the whole world through him...

So, Abraham listened and obeyed and started out in obedience to God.

Yet, he was still not a man of faith just yet, and the hard part for him to believe was that he would be a father of many.

So god took him at night and made him look up at the sky and told him...

Abraham, your descendants will be as great as the number of stars in the sky...



And then we read this in Genesis 15:6...

***5 And He took him outside and said, “Now look toward the heavens, and count the stars, if you are able to count them.” And He said to him, “So shall your [i]descendants be.” 6 Then he believed in the Lord; and He reckoned it to him as righteousness.***

The key thing to see there is this....

How was Abraham saved?

He believed God.

It was Abraham's faith that caused God to save him and call him righteous.

If you want to be saved today, you must believe God's promise to save you through the death of His Son Jesus Christ...

And when you believe and show your faith in God's promise, he puts your sin on Christ and he takes Christ's righteousness and puts it on you...

Faith is what saves...

Notice verse 6 doesn't say that Abraham did and bunch of good works and God considered him righteous...

It doesn't say that Abraham did any works of his own hands to be declared righteous before God....

He believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness...

Let me tell you this morning....

There is no one in here or in the history of mankind who has enough righteousness in them to be saved.....

It doesn't matter if it the sweetest woman you know or the kindest man you ever met...

None of us are righteous enough on our own to be right with God...

We need a righteousness outside of ourselves credited to our account in order to be right with God and be saved from sin..

Abraham needed it, Bud Moss needs it, Billy Graham needs it and you need it...

And the way to get that righteousness is not by working harder at obeying....

It is not by keeping every one of the 613 Jewish laws...

It isn't by memorizing the Bible or by being at church every Sunday...

The way to get that righteousness is by believing God's promise to save you through the life, death and resurrection of His Son.

Now, Abraham didn't know all the details of Jesus' life; he lived 2000 years before Jesus was born...

But He believed God's promise to send a Savior by looking forward to that day...

And we believe God's promise that He sent a Savior 2000 years ago...

You see Paul was appealing one of the Jews highest authorities when he pointed to Abraham...

It would be like me going in to a kid who was wanting to be a great football quarterback and trying to teach him a certain throwing technique by saying....

Well, this is how Joe Montana holds and throws the football...

Paul was pulling rank on them...

You want to be truly saved?

Then this is how Abraham, the father of the Jews was saved..

He was saved by faith, and if you think Abraham is right with God, you better let go of trying to be saved by keeping the law, and simply believe in the gospel...

And what Paul writes in verses 7-9 holds true today at Pine Grove Baptist church....

If you want to be a son of Abraham, which simply means if you want to be like Abraham who was and is an example of a true believer, you better base your salvation in faith and not the works of the law...

The Bible tells us that Abraham was saved by faith, and if we try to add works to faith, we add to the Bible what God never said....

But the story of Abraham in Genesis is not the only proof that faith saves...

Paul moves to another OT passage to provide salvation by faith in the next section...

Look at Galatians 3:10-14...

***10 For as many as are of the works of [o]the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of***

*the law, to perform them.” 11 Now that no one is justified [p]by [q]the Law before God is evident; for, “[r]The righteous man shall live by faith.” 12 [s]However, the Law is not [t]of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live [u]by them.” 13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a [v]tree”— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might [w]come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.*

This is one of the more difficult to understand passages in the book of Galatians, but let me simplify it for you...

Paul is simply adding to his case to reject the gospel of works by using the OT to once again prove that salvation comes through faith and not keeping the law of God...

To do this in these verses, he uses 4 different passages in the OT...

We don't need to go there to get an understanding of what Paul is saying...

You simply need to look at verse 11 and verse 12 to understand what Paul is saying...

In those verses, you have two people..

One lives by faith and the other one lives by the works of keeping the Law...

And what Paul is saying is this...

If you want to say that keeping the law of God is what saves you, that's fine...

Just realize that your eternal life will be determined by how well you keep the Law...

In other words, your eternal destination will be based on how well you keep the law...

And guess what?

That ain't looking too good for anyone who has ever been born into this world...

The other option to live is to live by faith in Jesus Christ who paid the penalty for our sin by hanging on a tree...

And in case you were wondering, there is no real choice there...

Have you kept the law of God perfectly ever since you came into this world?

And the answer from every man woman and child is no...

And since that option is off the table for all of us, we better start basing our salvation on our total trust in Jesus Christ...

Otherwise, you have no hope in this world....

You can't go back and correct all your disobedience to the Law, and besides you aren't going to obey from here on out either...

You have two options for salvation....

Keep the law of God perfectly or trust in Christ who kept the law perfectly for you and then died to pay the penalty for you breaking it....

Let me give you an illustration that may help here...

As a teenager, I was ready for independence from my dad...

And I used to complain....

I don't have any freedom here...

I want to be able to come in at night and do my own thing....

And my dad would always answer my complaints in the same calm way.

You want me to get off your case?

That's no problem at all, I will be glad to....

Rent will be due on the first of the month.

Your laundry needs to be taken to the laundromat or you can buy a building to house your washer and dryer.

Grocery money is due every Saturday...

And my response was always the same...

Well, I don't want to be independent that bad...

Paul is these foolish Galatians....

You want to live by the law?

Sure, that's fine...

Just remember that there is a great penalty for not obeying the law perfectly....

Good luck at that...

So, we have two reasons to reject the gospel of works..



First of all, a gospel of works is not how you were saved in the first place...

God saved you by faith in Him, so why now rely on a gospel that didn't save you in the first place...

Second, a gospel of works denies what the Bible teaches about how Abraham was saved...

And it denies what the OT teaches about how men are made right with God through faith alone in Him...

But there is one more reason to reject the gospel of works...

### **III. The Gospel of Works Denies God's Promise (15-18)**

Let me read verses 15-18 and I will be brief in explaining this final reason to reject the gospel of works..

*15 Brethren, I speak [x]in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's [y]covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds [z]conditions to it. 16 Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. 17 What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. 18 For if the inheritance is [aa]based on law, it is no longer [ab]based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.*

What Paul is getting at here is what the false teachers were arguing...

They were coming to Paul and they were coming to the Galatians who were teaching and believing in a gospel of grace apart from works, and they were saying this....

"You people who think that you are saved without doing any works or following the law of God are insane..."

If God wanted to save us by faith alone, why did he give us his law?

You see Abraham may have been saved by faith, but God changed his mind and made it so that man is saved by the law when he gave that law to Moses...

It may have been good for a while, but now times are different and people need to be saved by faith and by keeping the law...

And what Paul was telling the Galatians here is that there is no way that God would break a promise to Abraham...

God told Abraham you are righteous because you have trusted in me and my word...

And there is now way that God is going to break a promise....

Just because God gave his law 430 later, it didn't undo Abraham's salvation, and more importantly, the law being given to the people 430 years later didn't change salvation at all...

When God gives His word, it is finished and done...

And God told Abraham that his faith had saved him, and when he said that, it was final.

Let me give you an example....

Let's say you have child who is a good kid ready to enter 9th grade, and you tell him.....

Son, if you keep your grades up and get just one scholarship to help with your college costs...

I will buy you a car to get back and forth to school...

And let's say, your kids has a good 9th grade year, but in 10th grade, he falls into trouble...

And you have to come down hard on him for 10th, 11th and 12th grade by adding more rules and dishing out more punishments on him...

However, through all of that trouble, he keeps his grades up and gets one scholarship....

What are your to do?

Well, you are to keep your promise...

Your promise didn't say anything about his behavior or his attitude...

It simply required you to purchase a car if he got one scholarship...

And to go back on it, even if his behavior grew worse,  
would make you a promise breaker...

And that is Paul's argument here...

When the law came to Israel 430 years after the time of  
Abraham, it didn't mean that God had broken his  
promise and Abraham and was changing his mind...

God had given Israel the law for another purpose, and if  
you want to know what it is, you will have to return next  
Sunday.....

A quick preview would be this.....

The law didn't come to change the way a person is  
saved...

The law came to show a person his great need to be  
saved...

So, even though the people in Moses day got the law,  
nothing in the law changed how to be right with God...

And for the false teachers who were saying it did, Paul  
was simply saying....

There is no way that God would break his word to  
Abraham...

If God declared Abraham righteous because of his faith, it stands that men are made right with God based on their faith in Him...

### **Conclusion**

And it hasn't changed even today...

If you want to be saved today, you don't have to come shake my hand...

You don't have to get baptized first...

You don't have to walk this aisle, or fill out a salvation card...

If you want to be saved today, you simply need to believe that God sent his Son to live and die in your place....

Faith in the promises of God is what saves a man, - today or 2000 years ago or 4000 years ago...

And the Bible says that faith is a gift of God that doesn't come by works so that no man can boast....

If you need the faith to believe in God today, you beg  
God for that faith....

He will not deny those who earnestly seek Him.....

Abraham went outside on that quiet night, and God told  
him....

Abraham look at the stars...

Your descendants will be just as numerous in this  
world....

And though Abraham couldn't see a son or a grandson in  
the sky, he simply took God at his word and believed  
that promise.

And God rewarded that belief with salvation...

This morning you are not outside and it isn't dark...

And it isn't nearly as beautiful as that night...

You are sitting in a building in Fairview SC looking and  
listening to a nobody up here in this pulpit....

But let me tell you something...

Do you want God says to you this morning...

Look around you and listen to my Word....

If you will believe that I have sent my Son to live and die in your place to keep the law and pay for sin, I will save you this very hour....

On that night Abraham believed in something that he couldn't see, and this morning you need to believe in something that you can't see...

Jesus isn't on this stage, but God's promise is just the same....

Trust His Word and He will save your soul...

Walk away and you may never encounter him again...

Beg God for the faith you need today and simply believe.....

Let us pray.