

THURSDAY 22 September 2022 "Global Hope" (Gal. 3:6-25)

Good Thursday to you my 'Walking with Jesus' friends around the world.

I wonder how many times today you will find yourself making choices based on the laws of the land in which you live. If you're in an automobile today... what laws will govern how you drive? If you engage in any financial transaction, what laws will govern the amount of tax added to the value of your purchase? If you enter any building, what laws govern the construction of the buildings where you live so they are safe? *And have you noticed that for every law, I mean every law, every person who faces that law has a choice... obey the law or disregard the law?* And today, as you and I go through this day, we will face the same choice many times... obey the laws or disregard the laws?

Come with me please, back to the city of Syrian Antioch, about 48ad. As we walk through the busy street, we're coming now to a little house where the door stands open. Paul... that's right the apostle Paul himself, greets us and invites us to sit with a dozen or so other onlookers as we are watching a miracle happen each day in this house. *Paul is receiving direct revelation from the Holy Spirit of God who is leading Paul to write a very specific letter.* While the original recipients of this letter will be the first-generation Christians in the towns of Pisidian Antioch, Iconium, Lystra and Derbe, the places Paul and Barnabas visited on their first missionary journey, this letter will be eventually translated into almost every language known to mankind around the entire world, over the next several centuries. So, we are experiencing history being made as we watch Paul receive words from God and write them. I think Paul probably spoke each word as he carefully wrote them.

Yesterday we watched Paul begin his third chapter in this letter with some powerful, pointed, penetrating questions. Today Paul adds some specific teaching to those questions: ***"Consider Abraham: 'He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.' Understand then, that ALL those who believe God are children of Abraham."*** (Gal. 3:6,7) Paul paused. Paul was a Hebrew, a Jew, and proud of it. He was a well-trained Jewish scholar, and proud of it. He had been a Pharisee and proud of that too. *But he took the Gospel to Gentiles, and he is now writing primarily to Gentiles, for whom much of Paul's education and his biological pedigree and even his being a Pharisee was no big deal,* in fact it was almost meaningless to most Gentiles.

So why would Paul make mention of Abraham and God's declaration that Abraham was declared 'righteous' almost 2000 years BEFORE Jesus was born and Jesus lived, and Jesus was crucified for our salvation? Paul was again calling these Gentiles, and all who have ever read this Galatians letter, to understand that God's plan for the salvation of human beings did NOT begin with Jesus' birth in Bethlehem! Nor was it focused ONLY on the Jewish descendants of Abraham.

This miraculous, marvelous, Redemption, Salvation, Justification plan of God was made by God from the beginning of time, and God declared as 'righteous' those people, any people, all people who believed in HIM with the same authentic full faith as we today believe in the atonement death of Jesus to save us! Years later Paul spent almost the entire 4th chapter of Romans explaining this.

The Holy Spirit next led Paul to write: ***"The Scriptures foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith and announced the Gospel in advance to Abraham: 'All nations will be blessed through you.'"*** (Gal. 3:8) We know that the word "Gospel" means 'good news' and normally refers to the wonderful news that Jesus, God the Son, provides through His atonement death, the means by which God can forgive the sins of any person who places their full faith in Jesus.

God wanted Paul to again clarify that God was working His global plan for drawing people of all nations, including Gentiles, to Himself, when He called Abraham to live his life holding tightly to his great faith in God. If Abraham was faithful in living by faith, God would be faithful to His promise that Abraham and his wife Sarah would have a miraculous son born in their old age, and into the lineage of that son would eventually be born Jesus, the Savior of the world! *Jesus would be the ultimate way in which God would bless all nations through Abraham.* That miracle son, of course, was Isaac, born to Abraham when he was 100 years old, and Sarah 90 years old as found in Genesis 21!

While the Gentiles in Asia may not have been overly impressed with Jewish history all the way back to Abraham, it was very impactful to them that God had been working HIS plan and a pathway for Gentiles to be drawn into a sin forgiven relationship with Holy God, and that miraculous plan and pathway could be traced back 2000 years to Abraham and then forward, culminating in Jesus and His Gospel, which Paul had preached to them!

Over the next few verses Paul repeated and retaught the essential truths that this great Redemption plan of God was NOT for sale! *No person could purchase their sin salvation by any amount of money nor earn their sin salvation by any amount of work or effort.* They especially could not earn their sin salvation from God by their efforts to be perfect in keeping every law, every command, every statute, every decree found in the Scriptures.

Paul summarized this powerful truth this way: ***"If a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come to us by the law. But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who BELIEVE."*** (Gal. 3:21,22) The Gentiles understood, do we?

Paul made three powerful, life-giving declarations in that one statement: Do we see them?

1. **No law, no group of laws**, has ever been given to any person or society, that would provide the means by which a person could be declared either perfect or sin forgiven by God if they would completely and always fulfill the requirements of those laws!

2. **Every person, everywhere, in every generation through all time, lives as a prisoner of sin.** No one has ever been born perfect, lived a perfect life, and died without any sin. *And therefore, every person needs a Savior and a Salvation plan if they desire to be rescued from their sin condemnation.* That Savior must be powerful enough to break the stronghold of sin and ransom the sin prisoner from their sin condemnation.

3. God's Redemption Plan promises that God will forgive the sins of any person who fully trusts in Jesus Christ to be their Savior, and trusts that God will accept Jesus' death payment as *payment in full* for the sins of that person. **Therefore, our rescue from our prison of sin is accomplished by God in response to our BELIEF in Jesus's atonement death and God's promise of salvation.**

Paul picks up his stylus to write a final, summary declaration: **"So the law was put in charge to lead us to Jesus Christ that we might be justified by faith."** (Gal. 3:24) *Laws help us see our sin, our mistakes, our inescapable sin bondage and our desperate need for a Savior to set us free from our sin condemnation.* We are declared **"justified"** or sin forgiven by Holy God when we place our full faith in Jesus to be our Savior and in God to accept Jesus' death as payment in full for our sin debt.

Now I know you've probably heard that many times. I know I've said it many times in many different ways, but I have three closing, penetrating questions for you and me. . .

1. **Do you UNDERSTAND it?**
2. **Do you BELIEVE it to be God's TRUTH?**
3. **What have you done about it?**

You understand God cannot and will not engage in His powerful, personal work of declaring your sin forgiven and cleansing you from the guilt of your sin, and adopting you as His son or daughter, and assigning His Holy Spirit to regenerate in you a new, holy spiritual nature and then take up residence IN you. . . **UNTIL or UNLESS you actually repent of your sin and full trust in Jesus Christ to be your Savior!**

Oh friends, how my heart breaks when I consider there are likely millions, maybe hundreds of millions of people who have heard the Gospel and God's remarkable Salvation plan, perhaps many times, *but they have never taken action and personally engaged the salvation process with God.* I am convinced there will be many, many people who will stand before God on judgment day, confident they are going into heaven, but God will say to them: **"depart from me, I never knew you."** You'll see that in Matthew 25:41. Do you remember Jesus gave us that warning only days before His crucifixion? *Now I urge us all to ponder this reality... are you sure you have trusted Jesus Christ to be your Savior and God has saved you? If you have ANY question, please write me. I'd be delighted to help you.* **Today's Scripture is Galatians 3:6-25.**