
The Roman Road – Part 1
Is Faith Enough?
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Overview

The church is called to be the vehicle for spreading the good news of Jesus Christ to all nations. We are going to take a closer look at this process in sharing the Gospel, what it really means to those who are seeking, and the process to come into a saving faith with Jesus Christ.

Although this topic is about the Roman road, we are going to start today by talking about one of the most important factors in understanding God's Grace found in Galatians chapter 3.

One of the biggest challenges to helping others understand God's grace is undoing or debunking false teaching about salvation. Paul encountered this with the Galatians.

The question for today is this:

Is faith in Christ enough to get our lives right with God or is there more to it?

If so, where does the Mosaic law (Ten Commandments) and good-deeds come into the equation? Paul tells us that faith in Christ alone justifies us with God. In fact, Christ is the only way to get our lives right with God!

Galatians 3:1-5 (NIV)*Faith or Works of the Law*

3 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. 2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? 3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? 4 Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? 5 So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

1. We know that faith in Christ was enough because that is how we are saved**A. By faith we believed Christ died for our sins (3:1)**

3:1 You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified.

In Verse 3:1, Paul starts out calling the Galatians foolish!

Another way of putting this is **“You dear little idiots!”**

He is obviously perplexed at their ignorance. They have departed from what Paul taught them.

Paul reminds his readers of their spiritual experience as he preached the Gospel to them. **“Who has bewitched you?”** Paul asks. The use of the rhetorical question here means that the evidence is incontrovertible, that Paul believes the false teachers have brainwashed them.

(Asbury Bible Commentary)

Satan continues to use this same strategy today. He attempts to convince us that we have to be good enough before we can come into a relationship with the Lord. If we have that mind set, we will never fully be in the grace that God freely gives. We cannot give into false teaching as the Galatians apparently did!

What are some false teachings that have challenged you in the past?

B. By faith we received the Holy Spirit (3:2, 5)

2 I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?

5 So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard?

This is obviously a rhetorical question. Paul is reminding the Galatians that the Holy Spirit does not come upon us by the works we do, but by our faith in Jesus Christ.

You cannot earn the gift of the Holy Spirit! He is a gift. Receiving the Holy Spirit is a direct result of receiving Christ as your Lord and Savior. We do not earn the Spirit. He comes by no other means!

Read Acts 8:14-21

¹⁴ When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus.

¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.

¹⁸ When Simon saw that the Spirit was given at the laying on of the apostles' hands, he offered them money ¹⁹ and said, "Give me also this ability so that everyone on whom I lay my hands may receive the Holy Spirit."

²⁰ Peter answered: "May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! ²¹ You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God."

The Samaritans had received the Gospel of Jesus Christ, which opened them to receive the Holy Spirit. They did not receive it by observing the Jewish law. When Simon asked for this ability, it was obviously for his own selfish gain. Peter made it very clear that until Simon repented and accepted Christ, he would have no part in this ministry.

Peter pointed out that Simon's heart had to be right with God, not his outward works, but his heart alone.

2. We know that justification is by faith because that is the way Abraham, the patriarch of the Jewish people, was saved (3:6-9)

A. Abraham was declared righteous in response to his faith in God (3:6)

6 So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness."

Paul is using the argument that it was Abraham's faith, he completely believed God, and therefore his righteousness was credited him by faith alone, not works!

Read Romans 4:1-5

4 What then shall we say that Abraham, our forefather according to the flesh, discovered in this matter? ² If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. ³ What does Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

⁴ Now to the one who works, wages are not credited as a gift but as an obligation.

⁵ However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness.

Continue to Romans 4:20-24

20 Yet he did not waver through unbelief regarding the promise of God, but was strengthened in his faith and gave glory to God, 21 being fully persuaded that God had power to do what he had promised. 22 This is why “it was credited to him as righteousness.” 23 The words “it was credited to him” were written not for him alone, 24 but also for us, to whom God will credit righteousness—for us who believe in him who raised Jesus our Lord from the dead.

B. The true children of Abraham are the children of faith (3:7,9)

What was the promise God gave Abraham and who are the children of faith?

Read Genesis 17:3-8

3 Abram fell facedown, and God said to him, 4 “As for me, this is my covenant with you: You will be the father of many nations. 5 No longer will you be called Abram; your name will be Abraham, for I have made you a father of many nations. 6 I will make you very fruitful; I will make nations of you, and kings will come from you. 7 I will establish my covenant as an everlasting covenant between me and you and your descendants after you for the generations to come, to be your God and the God of your descendants after you. 8 The whole land of Canaan, where you now reside as a foreigner, I will give as an everlasting possession to you and your descendants after you; and I will be their God.”

God told Abraham that he would be the father of many nations (not just Israel). God said His covenant with Abraham would be **everlasting**.

God’s Children

7 Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham.

9 So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

Romans 9:6-8

⁶ It is not as though God’s word had failed. For not all who are descended from Israel are Israel. ⁷ Nor because they are his descendants are they all Abraham’s children. On the contrary, “It is through Isaac that your offspring will be reckoned.” ⁸ In other words, it is not the children by physical descent who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

C. Salvation by faith was God’s plan from the very beginning (3:8)

8 Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.”

This promise made to Abraham was not just for Israel, but all of the Gentiles.

Romans 4:16-17

¹⁶ Therefore, the promise comes by faith, so that it may be by grace and may be guaranteed to all Abraham's offspring—not only to those who are of the law but also to those who have the faith of Abraham. He is the father of us all. ¹⁷ As it is written: "I have made you a father of many nations." He is our father in the sight of God, in whom he believed—the God who gives life to the dead and calls into being things that were not.

3. We know that justification is by faith because that is the only way to be saved (3:10-14)

A. The Curse of the Law (3:10-12)

i. No one can keep the Mosaic law, therefore the law is a curse. (Gal. 3:10)

10 For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law."

Romans 4:14 Says:

14 For if those who depend on the law are heirs, faith means nothing and the promise is worthless, 15 because the law brings wrath.

ii. God never intended for you to get right with Him by keeping the law (3:11)

(also see Habakkuk 2:4)

11 Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith."

Habakkuk 2:4

*“See, the enemy is puffed up;
his desires are not upright—
but the righteous person will live by his faithfulness—*

Read Hebrews 10:1-9

The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. For this reason it can never, by the same sacrifices repeated endlessly year after year, make perfect those who draw near to worship.² Otherwise, would they not have stopped being offered? For the worshipers would have been cleansed once for all, and would no longer have felt guilty for their sins.³ But those sacrifices are an annual reminder of sins.⁴ It is impossible for the blood of bulls and goats to take away sins.

⁵ Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said:

*“Sacrifice and offering you did not desire,
but a body you prepared for me;*

*⁶ with burnt offerings and sin offerings
you were not pleased.*

*⁷ Then I said, ‘Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—
I have come to do your will, my God.’”*

⁸ First he said, “Sacrifices and offerings, burnt offerings and sin offerings you did not desire, nor were you pleased with them”—though they were offered in accordance with the law.

⁹ Then he said, “Here I am, I have come to do your will.” He sets aside the first to establish the second.¹⁰ And by that will, we have been made holy through the sacrifice of the body of Jesus Christ once for all.

iii. Faith and Law cannot be combined (3:12)

12 The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them."

Galatians 2:16 (NIV)

¹⁶ know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.

B. The cure for the curse (3:13, 14)

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 hung on a pole." 14 He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

Romans 8:1 Says:

Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus,

It does not say there is no condemnation for those who uphold the law.

Conclusion

Paul, once and for all, rejects the notion that the law and efforts under the law can release God's power or Spirit. Nor can they promote God's gracious dealing with humankind, as the "false teachers" had been suggesting. To be captivated by the Jewish ritual of circumcision was to reject the legitimacy of a spiritual experience by faith. Faith alone is our justification. All who trust in Jesus Christ are saved.