

Life Group Lesson

SUPERNATURAL • Week of September 18

Introduction

When it comes to spiritual matters, the Bible promotes a strong work ethic. For example, the apostle Paul was a tent maker and provided for himself (and others) while also doing ministry, preaching and evangelizing. He said, “We never accepted food from anyone without paying for it. We worked hard day and night so we would not be a burden to any of you... we wanted to give you an example to follow. Even while we were with you, we gave you this command: ‘Those unwilling to work will not get to eat’” (2 Thessalonians 3:8-10). To Titus, Paul says: “encourage the young men to live wisely... and be an example to them by doing good works of every kind” (Titus 2:6-7a). A strong foundation of faith in Christ will produce hard work.

Indeed, God created us to find a sense of worth and deep satisfaction when we work hard for something – like a great harvest at the end of planting and cultivating, serving in a ministry, earning a degree, achieving a long-awaited goal, or participating in a successful community outreach event – hard work has great purpose in this world. God gives us strengths, gifts, and talents to use to better ourselves and help others. A healthy parent wants their child to value hard work. God also desires this for His children. Yet, one day, when we stand before God, all effort to do good and work hard will not guarantee entry into heaven. Salvation is not earned but a free gift of God provided through His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. It is supernatural.

Background

Paul writes the churches scattered across the province of Galatia—

“I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead... I am shocked that you are turning away so soon from God, who called you to himself through the loving mercy of Christ. You are following a different way that pretends to be the Good News but is not the Good News at all. You are being fooled by those who deliberately twist the truth concerning Christ”
(Galatians 1:1, 6-7).

False believers (spies as Paul called them) were trying to worm their way into the church, teaching that Gentiles had to follow Jewish law in order to be made right with God. Paul says no! All who believe are made right with God only

through faith in Christ. Salvation can never be earned by keeping the law. We are born into this world as sinners and no one can keep the law perfectly (see Psalm 14:1-4, Ecclesiastes 7:20, Isaiah 53:6, Romans 3:23). And though the law was given in glory, it ends in death for it reveals how sinful we are. God provided a new and better way to be saved through His Son. This new way given through the Holy Spirit, results in life (see 2 Corinthians 3:7-11). Thus, salvation is a *supernatural* work of God’s Spirit.

Reading the Text

Read Galatians 3:1-9

1. What is the Holy Spirit saying to you?
2. What are you going to do about it?
3. How can we help you?

Reflection

Why were the churches in Galatia beginning to drift from the truth they had been taught? Who had they been listening to? By whom are you influenced? Paul is stern: “Let God’s curse fall on anyone, including us or even an angel from heaven, who preaches a different kind of Good News that the one we preached to you” (Galatians 1:8). Paul recognized the subtle, destructive work of the enemy. In another letter, Paul writes: “These people are false apostles. They are deceitful workers who disguise themselves as apostles of Christ. But I am not surprised! Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light (2 Corinthians 11:14). When we begin to feel good about our ritual and tradition (our works) over the power and love of God demonstrated through Christ’s death on the cross, our pride tells us we deserve heaven and God owes us.

God owes us nothing. And yet, He graciously gives us Himself—

“God decided in advance to adopt us into his own family by bringing us to himself through Jesus Christ. This is what he wanted to do, and it gave Him great pleasure. So we praise God for the glorious grace he has poured out on us who belong to his dear Son. He is so rich in kindness and grace that he purchased our freedom with the blood of his Son, and forgave our sins”
(Ephesians 1:5-7).

In Closing

We have a lot to be thankful for! As followers of Christ, our work is to share this Good News: *all of humanity* stands in need of forgiveness – yet Christ stands ready to forgive us! “For God was in Christ, reconciling the world to himself, no longer counting people’s sins against them. And He gave us this wonderful message of reconciliation” (2 Corinthians 5:19). Hopefully, once we come to faith in Christ, our desire will be to tell others about the extravagant, supernatural love of our Lord. God shares His grace and power so that we can serve others in Jesus’ name.

Good deeds (works) will not earn our way into heaven, but our good deeds will follow us and earn us a reward at the Lord’s return. “Yes, the Sovereign LORD is coming in power. He will rule with a powerful arm. See, he brings his reward with him as he comes” (Isaiah 40:10). If you have fully surrendered your life to Jesus, ask the Lord what new assignment he has for you. Or perhaps, ask the Lord to give you strength to continue on with greater courage some work he has already given you. Jesus says—

“Look, I am coming soon, bringing my reward with me to repay all people according to their deeds. I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End” (Revelation 22:12-13).

Close in a Time of Prayer asking:

How can I pray for my fellow Life Group participants this week?

One Year Bible Readings

September 18: Isaiah 28:14-30:11, Galatians 3:23-4:31, Psalm 62:1-12, Prov. 23:19-21

September 19: Isaiah 30:12-33:9, Galatians 5:1-12, Psalm 63:1-11, Proverbs 23:22

September 20: Isaiah 33:10-36:22, Galatians 5:13-26, Psalm 64:1-10, Proverbs 23:23

September 21: Isaiah 37:1-38:22, Galatians 6:1-18, Psalm 65:1-13, Proverbs 23:24

September 22: Isaiah 39:1-41:16, Ephesians 1:1-23, Psalm 66:1-20, Proverbs 23:25-28

September 23: Isaiah 41:17-43:13, Ephesians 2:1-22, Psalm 67:1-7, Proverbs 23:29-35

September 24: Isaiah 43:14-45:10, Ephesians 3:1-21, Psalm 68:1-18, Proverbs 24:1-2

SUPER NATURAL

Text: Galatians 3:1-9

Plain Truth:

God shares grace and _____ with _____; yet He will not share His _____.

1. Works cannot make us _____; the _____ makes us _____.
2. Abraham was a _____ of God because of _____ not a _____.
3. The Holy Spirit falls upon _____, and _____ enables signs and wonders.

September 18, 2022