



THE SIMPLE GOSPEL

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## GALATIANS: A MULTI-CULTURAL BLESSING FROM GOD

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### Galatians 3: 1 – 9:

The gospel or good news of Jesus Christ. While incredible is not incredibly complicated, even though the implications are far-reaching, the good news itself is actually quite simple, often believed to be best for those starting their journey with Christ. The gospel informs and shapes everything in the Christian life. From brand new believer to seasoned disciple. The gospel is how we are transformed and how we play a role in the transformation of those around us. Join us for a nine week study walking verse by verse through Paul's letter to the church in Galatia. Go to [doxa-church.com](http://doxa-church.com) to learn more about Doxa, find service times or support the making of disciples and the everyday stuff of life.

Galatians chapter three, verses one through nine. Oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish having begun by the Spirit? Are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the scripture for seeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying in you shall all nations be blessed? So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. This is the word of the Lord. You can be seated.

Morning, everybody. Hey, uh, you may have talked to me in the lobby and you may know my voice is sort of going out. So I've decided to do what I discern as the impossible for me, which is

to talk a little quieter, huh? I'm gonna do, I'm gonna do my best. So you may see me sipping on some hot water and stuff like that, but um, I think the Lord will show up for us regardless. And so I'm glad you guys are all here. Uh, we're in Galatians chapter three. We have a lot of ground to cover in this passage. This is a lot. It's gonna be good. It's gonna be fun. I hope it's life giving for you. So I'm gonna pray and then, uh, we will get right into it.

Lord Jesus, I pray that you would sustain my voice. I pray I would, uh, yield, uh, heed rather, Paul's words when he came, not to give testimony with lofty speech, but decided to know nothing amongst everyone except Christ crucified. Might none of us might all of us rather approach you with such humility, might we know that the only thing that's really important, Lord, is you. There's so many distractions, and we rarely get quiet moments like we do here on the east side, but this is one that even for a few minutes, we might come to know you in a deeper way. So we ask for the Spirit to be present, ask for a hedge of protection, uh, for all of us as we proclaim the or proclaim and listen to the word and pray for the spirit to seal this space so we might know you well. In Jesus' name. Amen.

All right, well, for those of you that have been joining us, we've been in the book of Galatians for the last several weeks, and, um, we've been talking about this idea of what it means to have this simple gospel. Like what's this simple gospel. Now, Paul, the author, uh, he's been ringing the same bell over and over again, and he's gonna continue to do that for all of these nine weeks. And that bell is simple. Okay, here it is. There is nothing that you or I can do to earn our salvation from God. That's right. Nothing. There's nothing we can do. It's a free unearned gift, free unearned gift from God that we receive only and purely by his grace.

Now, Paul is writing to people in Galatia. This is that town that the book's named after. And these people are in the process of sort of re including / obeying Jewish laws as a part of the way they're saved, okay? That's what they're doing. They essentially believe that believing in Jesus and the Messiah, the Messiah is a great start. It's a great start and we should do that.

But in order to be really a true believer, in order to really understand this, we must sort of put in the work. We've gotta be a good Jew, we've gotta be circumcised, we've gotta be a good person, and we've gotta follow these rules. And then and only then will we demonstrate how much we love God and actually be accepted by him.

Now, I wanna say upfront I'm well aware of the challenge that is to our souls in order to not believe that's true. I have that challenge. I wrote this sermon and I'm writing it, and I'm writing this like, wow. But, but I do add something though. You know what I mean? Like I am pretty awesome.

It's true. You do add something. Jonathan Edwards, the theologian, he says, you add nothing to your own salvation except the sin that made it necessary. <laugh>. So we do, we do add something, uh, but it's not exactly what we were thinking, okay? So I'm aware of the challenge it is to our souls to try not to believe it. It's the human condition. So we're gonna try to continue to talk about that idea even today. And I know we feel uneasy as it makes us all feel that we add nothing to it. I hope that we'll be able to sort of harp on this and challenge ourselves in this.

And I also know from talking to some of you how hard this series has been. I mean, some of you said, man, I'm, I'm feeling really convicted over these last few weeks. This has been difficult. And that's kind of what the book of Galatians does. I mean, that's, that's the nature of the book.

But, but today, today we actually get some very, very good news from Paul. Finally, some good news. He's been calling everyone crazy and all this stuff. And now here we're gonna get some good news. And the news is, is that all people, every culture, every race, every language, every disability, every socioeconomic status, all of that, all people can receive the greatest blessing from God that he would ever give. That's right. Today, God's gonna offer you a blessing, right? And I know that's a red flag for many people in church these days. Like God's gonna ride by. How much is it gonna cost is usually the first question that comes to mind. But we're not talking about that sort of blessing.

There's actually never been a promise of a bigger blessing in the history of the world. Nothing. Not politics, not ideologies, no sort of nebulous concept of love. Not even a, an awesome holiday marketing campaign can bring the world together like this. Nothing can. And we all can have access to this blessing through a man named Abraham today. Does anyone who Abraham is some of you like, I've never heard of him. Some of you like that's my cousin. No, not that Abraham different, different Abraham. A long time ago, God made an unbelievable promise of, of a blessing to an old guy named Abraham that through him every nation, people of all nations would be blessed. Okay?

I want to call out how, maybe, how, maybe I don't know, unexciting, that might sound to you <laugh>. That's, that's how I was at. Maybe that's not news because you're a Christian and you're thinking like, yeah, I get it. Promise of Abraham, I've heard it.

Or you're not a follower of Jesus and you're hearing this and you're thinking, who cares about an old guy and this blessing? Like, that's not relevant for me in 2023. A blessing would be, I don't know, hitting that Washington state lottery. That would be a blessing. Like that's when I think about blessing, I don't think about an old guy. I think about inheriting some Google or Tesla stock -- blessing. Or just even be able to buy a house in 2023. Blessing. Like that would be a blessing if the interest rates come down. Like that's what I'm talking about when I think about blessing, not some guy named Abraham. And if that's you, I get it. I totally get it. But I do wanna say, this isn't some ancient religious rhetoric that has no effect on you today. Oh, no, no, no. This is so much bigger.

Even though I can't really talk, you really do have to hear this. Like this is such a big deal. You'd be hard pressed to find a man that is less influential and less relevant today. Abraham, Big deal. The big three religions of the world, Christianity, Islam, and Judaism, all have their roots in this guy, Abraham, that's 4.6 billion people. The planet that's over half the planet is deeply concerned with the blessing of Abraham. That's not counting everyone who's passed away. This is really important. In fact, if you don't care about the promise of Abraham, you are in the severe minority throughout history. Everyone cares about this. So even as churchy or as vanilla as this word blessing might sound to you, and it does, it did to me. It impacts you. Whether you're a Christian or whether you're not. I would argue there's nothing better you can do with

the next 30 minutes of your time than to wrap your head around what this blessing is. Nothing. You can do it, it does affect you.

So for today, humor me. We're gonna deep dive this. We're gonna deep dive this blessing together for the next 30 ish minutes. And we're gonna ask three questions. What is it? How do I get it? And how does it actually affect me today? What is it? How do I get it? And how does it affect me today?

So first, in order to get into this, let's read the first few lines of chapter three together, shall we? First one, Paul says, oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. So Paul starts off the blessing by calling people idiots. Bear with me for a second, because the word foolish, like doesn't sound all that bad today. You know what I mean? Maybe back in 2000 years ago, you heard the word foolish and you'd be like, oh, oh my gosh, today foolish.

He's really saying you idiots. What have you done? Right? That's, that's what he's getting at. You idiots. What have you done? You're, you're messing this up. You're crazy for, for not believing this. And then he uses the word bewitched. Who bewitched you. Have you ever used that word in a sentence, right? No. It's an old timey word for like, you're possessed. What are you thinking? Right? So this blessing starts with him calling them fools.

What? Gifts? Well, Paul is up in arms over the Galatians, rejection of this big old blessing we're about to talk about. He is astonished that they'd reject it, astonished all the words you can think of. He is, he is, he's dumbfounded. He's, uh, flabbergasted, he's bamboozled, hoodwinked, gob-smacked, horn-swagged. He's like all of those things. Like, what are you doing? How are you thinking this? These people had an opportunity at a blessing, so powerful and so overwhelming, and they rejected it and they rejected it.

It's kind of a little bit like, some of you know what I'm talking about. It's kind of a little bit like you're dating somebody and she's awesome. Let's say you're a guy and she's awesome and you've been dating for like one year, two years, God forbid, 3, 4, 5 years. Oh, get outta that relationship if it's going that long without an engagement. Sorry if that offended you, but come on now, pull the trigger. So you're thinking about it and, and she's amazing. She's perfect. And, and everyone's like, so when are you gonna, when are you gonna propose? And she's like, you're like, ah, I don't know. I gotta get my finances in order and I get a better job and blah, blah, blah. And they go, you idiot! You need to propose. She's perfect. This is the sort of way Paul is talking to him. You're an idiot if you don't marry her.

I can't believe you reject the biggest blessing that you ever receive, Galatians. And you say, well, I have a lot of questions. Of course, let's keep reading verse two. So let me ask you, let me ask you only this. Did you receive the spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish having begun in the spirit? Are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith, just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness?

All right, friends, we're getting to the promise here. Paul then starts by recapping sort of all of the things we've been talking about the last few weeks, right? He says, so let me get this straight. You were saved by grace. God saves you. He loves you through the Holy Spirit. But now you think now that you've been saved, you're gonna start to earn his grace by working for it. That doesn't add up. That doesn't make a lot of sense. In fact, you're, you're foolish, you're an idiot. You're going backwards. This is not where you're at, right? You've messed this up. You, you, you're, you're reversing the gospel and he says, does the spirit save you through your behavior? How could it?

Isn't that you saving yourself and the spirit sort of watching? How's that possible? Now we're then we're starting to get somewhere. Then in verse 60, he appeals to our guy Abraham, remember the father of the big three world religions? And he says, you know, Abraham was saved, but how was he saved? Through believing, It says, through believing not through works.

So if you keep reading in Galatians, you'll know that Abraham comes before the law of Moses. He says it right here in Galatians. It's 430 years at least. That's a long time in that gap. So how could Abraham be saved by obeying the law that doesn't exist? That's what Paul's saying. It's impossible. It's not impossible. So he's saved from something else. What is he saved from? Believing he's saved through believing by faith. What did he believe in? Exactly? And I think this is really important for us to really understand like what does Abraham believe? Cuz if we know that, then we might be able to unlock the key to our own faith here a little bit. Well, let me give you the, the heads up. Excuse me.

Long time ago, God made a promise to Abraham that he and his wife Sarah would bear a son. Now they're very old, well past childbearing years, almost a hundred years old. That's really old. So there, there's no chance of that. And he tell, God tells Abraham that through his own family line, he's going to bless the entire world. Now, how's that possible? Now obviously being way past childbearing years, Abraham and Sarah, probably a little dumbfounded. All of those weird words I used earlier and probably a little bit confused like, I don't know about that. God, here's what God actually says in Genesis 15. And he brought 'em outside and said, look toward the heaven and number the stars if you are able to number them, which obviously he can't. Then he said to him, so shall your offspring be. And he believed the Lord and counted it to him as righteousness. Wow. So through a couple who can't have kids anymore, God is going to give them the ability to bear children and through the offspring, he's going to bless the entire world with these kids.

Now that we know that, let's look back at Galatians verse seven, know then that those who, that it is those of faith who are sons of Abraham. And the scripture for seeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham. What? Saying in you shall all the nations be blessed.

So then those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. Okay, so here we go. This is the big stuff here. God from the very beginning knew that his goal was never to just have the Jews saved. He always had it from the beginning. It says here the Gentiles. but how? It says here that God beforehand preached the gospel to Abraham.

Now question, Who is the gospel about? Jesus? Jesus, good. You've been paying attention. It's about Jesus. You may note Jesus in the flesh was not around when Abraham was there. So how did he have faith on a guy dying on a cross for him? Ah, good question. He had faith that God's promise would come true. That he would bring a kingly messiah through his own family line to bless the entire world. Abraham is saved through faith in Jesus. That's what Galatians is telling us here. That's a big deal. Now save from what you ask, like what exactly is Jesus saving us from? I think that's a good question. And here it really is, the big promise right here on the screen, Abraham's blessing is that God would solve not just some, all of the world's problems through Abraham's family, all of the world's problems.

Who here's got problems. Don't raise your hand. What are you doing? I'm just kidding. This is church. We're gonna, you know, like we're gonna mark you down for being sinful. Like, no, I'm just kidding. I've got problems. We've all got problems, right? We've got problems. So maybe you're thinking there's no way somebody can solve all of the world's problems. Impossible. I think the Bible teaches otherwise, listen, the world's filled with problems. You know it and I know it. We all know this. There's division, there's murder, natural disasters. Should I keep going? Depression, war, betrayal, sickness, death and the like. All of this stuff, all are massive problems. And there's so many more, but you and I are a part of these problems. We cause some of these problems. You and I, we rebel against God. We hurt other people. We hurt ourselves. We even hurt God himself.

We as people often disobey what God says is good and go our own way. And it never works out. Never works out. I mean, we just read about last week, there's racial conflict here in the US and abroad, but even in Galatia, Paul, uh, Peter rather caused multicultural and racial division. He caused it. And guess what? He was trying to be obedient to God. He was trying to do something positive. Even when humanity tries to be good and fair and equal, it oftentimes does just the opposite.

And God, he's sick of this issue. So he said he promises Abraham a man, that through his family, Abraham would come a man. And this man would be a blessing to this nation. He would be a blessing to all nations rather. And this man would be his own son Jesus. And Jesus would come and he would live a perfect life and he would bring, uh, goodness and healing and peace to a world that is distraught with brokenness and evil.

And that world is gonna kill Jesus. It's so wicked and vile. That's our world. But death cannot not hold Jesus. And he resurrects from the grave, which is an amazing story that Jesus essentially would die for us. But anyone who would believe in Jesus by faith would inherit the death that Jesus died on our behalf. And we would also then receive his goodness and righteousness on us. We could be just like Abraham was counted as righteous before God. That's an amazing promise. This is beautiful. And then we all get to have joy and peace in the world as we wait for an attorney with God, right? Gospel.

That's not it. There's more to the gospel. Jesus is coming back and one day he will come to judge the living and the dead and he will redeem this planet. And from it he's gonna pull sickness and death and evil and hell and demons and all of these evil things from it and jealousy

and gossip and slander and judgment and pride and arrogance and lust. He's gonna yank 'em all from the planet and redeem, renew, restore the world back to its original creation. Most Christians think you're gonna go be a big fat baby on a cloud somewhere in heaven. But that's not true. What's gonna happen is Jesus is gonna redeem, renew, restore this planet here, and you will be here in a redeemed body, now!

The world that you long for and hope for is possible in Christ. The promise of Abraham isn't that you get to go to heaven when you die the promise of heaven. Well that's part of it. The promise of Abraham is that you get to be here on a renewed planet with renewed bodies with Christ, as Lord. That's what the kingdom of God is. It's the people of God and the place of God under the rule of God. And one day in its fullness, we'll get to experience that.

Now, how does that feel? That's pretty good. You don't have to be afraid to clap too, by the way. If you love the gospel, you can clap like you're not clapping for me, you're clapping for Jesus, right? That's, that's good. Then and only then would all people of the world be blessed, but only by belief in the Son. Now, I don't know about you, but I want a piece of that. Does anyone here want a piece of that? That's right. I want some of that. But I think for a, I think that's really hard to imagine.

So for a second, let's like sit in this, There was a, uh, there was an old guy a long time ago, started a movement named John Wimber. And he used to say that we don't hype the spirit up, that the spirit comes down and sometimes we try to manifest him, right? But he does what he wants, he's God.

So let's just sit here for a second. If you don't mind joining me and closing your eyes. Let's ask the Holy Spirit to be with us and close your eyes for a second and just do a few things for me. Take a breath and imagine a world where death is literally no longer a reality. Like you're gonna walk outta here into a 74 degree sunny day in Washington. And that day's never gonna end. And the people you've lost, the people who have broken relationships, everything will be reconciled, everyone will get along. There'll be no anger, no sadness, no depression, no grief. Estranged family will be reunited. You'll live forever. And if you're sick now you won't be sick. And if you're, you have a family member that's sick, they won't be sick. If, if your throat's going out like mine, your throat won't be going out. Everything will be restored, never ending glory.

How does that feel? Okay, you can open your eyes. That's the promise that God offers the world. It's not follow a bunch of rules, be saved, be rude to everyone else who's not following the rules, and then go be in some cloud with a harp one day. That's not what we're talking about here. We're talking about total restoration of everything we know to be wrong with the world.

Now if you're Christian or not, you know, there are things that are not the way they're supposed to be. Jesus has come to solve that problem. So the big question is how do we get that? Well, let's keep reading. Verse 10. For all who rely on works of the law under a curse for it is written cursed, be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of law, the

law. And do them now though it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith.

Paul's trying to show them something, right? This is something happening here. So before we talk about how we get the blessing, Paul wants us to know how we don't get it, how we don't get the blessing. And here's how we don't get it. We do not get it by earning it. We don't get it by earning it. And we've talked about this a lot, but we need to say it again because like we talked about, it is astonishing how unwilling legalism is to die in our hearts. And this is another example of this. We gotta talk about it. The promise of Abraham friends is just that it's a promise.

It is a promise. Now, promises are only contingent on the promise maker. That's it. The person offering the promise. If I offer you a promise, it is not contingent on your performance, right? That's what a promise is. If, if I give you something based on your performance, then it's not a promise, it's a, it's a contract, right? You fulfill your duties, I'll fulfill mine. It's a contract. A promise is solely and only about the promise maker's ability and desire to maintain that promise. Make sense?

God's offering us a promise, not based on performance, but Paul does say we're offered the law of God as well. And I guess the natural question is, well then why do we have the law if we aren't, if we're not supposed to use it an order to earn God's favor and blessing? Like why does he give the law if we have this promise from Abraham that God's going to keep anyway, what's the point of having? Isn't that a fair question? Right? It might solve some issues.

The law was a set of rules, guidelines, and a really a way of life designed to do a few different things. First, if you're ever wondering what the law was for this is it first the law was given because people were spoiler alert, really hardheaded. God knows that you're hardheaded, okay? He, he figured it out a long time ago. Your, your spouse has been telling you, but it's been true and it's still true. We are all hardheaded and we're sinful people. Like even verse 19 says, why? Then the law Paul says, well, it was added because of transgressions. You know what transgressions are? You're doing stuff you're not supposed to be doing. You're doing stuff you know is wrong and you still keep doing it.

Stop. You have an image and likeness of God in you. Stop doing those things. And he says, it has been added because of transgressions until the offsprings should come to whom the promise had been made. It was put in place through angels by an intermediary. Now there needed to be a code of conduct for sinful people. That's us. So that they understood what was right and wrong. We needed to understand that because, but okay, the law was not designed as a way to make you perfect. Like if you followed it, you'd be perfect. In fact, it was actually done, it was actually installed for quite the opposite. It was installed to show you where you're wrong, not where you're right.

The law would show Israel its guilt and it would show them and us, by the way, that you and I were unable to measure up to the power of sin. We can't do it. It's a diagnostic tool. It's less a rule book and more of a diagnostic tool to show you where you fail and where you need a



savior. That's what it's for. We've had this many times, but people have come in and here into Doxa, but other places and they've come in and said, you know, I just find it so ridiculous how you are not trying to fulfill all the laws of Moses.

And they're looking at my clothing, not obviously not the same sort of cloth and all of that stuff. And I don't have, like, I've cut my hair and such. And they, and they say, well, in order to be loved by God, what you need to do is you need to obey the laws of Moses. God. That's what, what it's here for. And oftentimes the question I ask back is, well, have you heard of Jesus? Jesus came not to abolish a law, but to fulfill a lot of those laws. And we get into this big philosophical debate. The point is, good luck trying to fulfill all 600 plus laws. They're impossible.

Have you ever read the Old Testament and uh, just open it up just for a quick light read and um, start scrolling and then go, how the heck does anybody do all of this? Have you ever done that? Exactly. That's, that's what it's designed for. It's designed to show you how impossible that is.

Even the Israelites who tried to fulfill it couldn't. That's why they had a sacrificial system. You understand that, right? Even, even they weren't who were actively trying to fulfill it couldn't. Jesus is the next sacrifice. He's the ultimate sacrifice. And so Jesus fulfills all of these laws. The law was there to show you where you failed and need the Savior. Even for Israel, they realized that I'm broken in this way and I need to make an animal sacrifice. You understand this is a big deal. But there was a second reason why the law was given. It was given to help Israel stay in line, but also to remain set apart from other, from, uh, among the other nations. The law helped keep Israel healthy and clean, but it also helped them remain an example of holiness to people who weren't followers of God.

Did you know that the Christian Church is not? Is that, that that idea is not gone for us, that we're also supposed to do that? We're also supposed to live holy lives knowing that we can't keep all 615 laws, but we believe and by faith in Christ and we pursue obedience because he loves us as an example to the people around us. Oftentimes we become legalistic religious people. That is not a fun example. And people don't like religion. Some of you folks that aren't Christians, you know exactly what I'm talking about. You're not a Christian because you've met someone who thinks they do it all right? And guess what the Bible says, you can't. That's why Jesus came. Does that make sense? Okay, Jesus is here cuz you're not perfect and neither am I. This is how, this is why he's come.

There is one more important fact though about the law and it's, it is very important. And it's this: the law was always intended to be temporary, always intended to be temporary. Look at verse 24. So then the law was our guardian until Christ came in order that we might be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian for in Christ Jesus. You are all sons of God through, through faith. That's right.

So the law was important, but it was never designed to be the way people were saved, although it was partially designed to show people where they needed saving. So the law doesn't get to edit God's promise to Abraham. It doesn't get to say, oh Abraham, you get, you

know, through the family line that's coming, you're gonna get this savior who's gonna save everyone. But you've also gotta sort of hold up your end of the bargaining order to fill that promise.

That's not what happened with the law. If the law was the way to my salvation, it would mean God didn't need a savior for us. We just needed a process, just a book with a bunch of rules that if we follow, we're in. That's called a manual, by the way. It's like following Ikea furniture. You mess up once and the whole thing's ruined, right? And that's kind of true for our salvation.

So if that's true, we don't need a savior, we just need a process. And let me tell you, many people are choosing a process over a savior. Many of us just want the manual. Just gimme the book. I'll read it if I do that, I like the rules. I like to love my neighbors yourself. How do I do that? Boom, mow neighbors lawn, boom, bring over gross Jello to their house when they move in <laugh>, boom, you know, offer this, this, and this.

And you just put together a bullet list that says, you go, ah, loved my neighbors myself today. And totally missing the effective nature of what that means, which is transferring the love of Jesus on you and living that out towards them so that they would come to know Jesus in a way that's amazing. That's what we miss here.

I actually, to be fair, I have actually really guilty of this. I tell you guys a story of like my, um, on Easter. I told it, if you're new about how I met Jesus and how this guy gave me a Bible. And I was like, oh, I got this Bible and then I read it and I read the book of John and blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. But I, I edited a little bit the story, part of the story goes like this. I said, well, how do I know Jesus? And he says, well, um, you know, you place your faith in Jesus. You ask him to be in relationship with him and then you grow in his knowledge of God and yada yada. And I was like, well, what, what about all the rules? And he is like, oh, well yeah, those are rules there, but it's a little complicated, a little short for our time now. But essentially Jesus fulfilled a lot of those. And so you live them out through your faith in him. And I was like, okay, but people can follow 'em still though, right? I mean, yeah, I guess. Okay. I said, give me 72 hours and I will have this thing nailed. And I, with such arrogance of an ignorant zeal of an 18, 19 year old kid, I was like, looked at. I like, is this it? And I'm like, cockeyed looking at this thing.

And I kid you not less than 12 hours later I was cussing at a basketball game at the players <laugh> and I, who knows what else I did on the way to that basketball game as an 18 year old kid, you know what I mean? But I was, that's where I was. I was not ready within 72 hours to master the law of God. I couldn't even read half the words, let alone study them and embody them. That's not how it works, but I'm guilty of that.

So if you don't earn your way to salvation, how do you get the blessing of Abraham? Then? Paul said it already a few times: receive the blessing of Abraham by faith. Now that might spark a few questions in you. It might spark a few questions and it did with me. But here's what you need to know. Abraham was saved by faith in the coming Messiah. And we too are saved by faith in the Messiah Jesus. But it does bring up that big question and it's sort of this, well have faith in Jesus.

What is faith then? Exactly. I mean, I know it has something to do with believing something to be true, but isn't faith the opposite of evidence? No. And then, well, if you trust your evidence, why do you trust it? Oh, I, you know, if you have a theory on something, why do you trust it to be true? I said, well, I have confidence in it. Okay, we have confidence, not faith, but confidence is literally Latin "confide" -- with faith.

So in order to have confidence in something is essentially the same thing as having faith in something. That's what we're talking about here, to have faith in it. But the question is like, well how, what does that mean? Like how do I do that? Well, this could take years to explain, but I do want to give you three very clear items that to keep in mind when you're deciding to place your faith in Jesus. Okay?

Three things regarding your faith. First, faith is specific and specific. Abraham was saved by faith in something. Not like a nebulous like, oh, I just have faith that everything will work out. Like what does that mean? I have faith that everything will work out one day and everything will. Like what are you talking about? To who? To what? What are you looking at? Like, what is going on? Faith. Faith is specific.

Verse 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 hanged on the tree. That's the cross. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the Promised Spirit through faith.

Abraham is saved by faith, that Jesus became a curse on our behalf and was hung on a tree and died and rose from the grave. He believed that and that he would ultimately blessed the world by redeeming, renewing, restoring it. Abraham was saved by faith in the coming Messiah. That is incredibly specific, right? That's why people don't believe it.

It's, it's not just I believe in a God, right? That's not what we're talking about. Faith is not just a belief that God, capital G God exists. That's not what it is. Even it's not enough to believe God exists. The book of James says, even demons believe God exists. It's not enough. Both demons aren't Christians, demons don't have saving faith. So what does it mean? Well, belief in a God or a God again, is not a saving faith. All it is an acknowledgement that you're a theist and that God may or probably does exist. Abraham had to have legitimately had to legit legitimately trust in God's promise, specifically He had to know it would come true. He had to know, believe in the character of God and know that what God said would come to pass. He had to believe that.

Many of us, again, we're out there with like a nebulous general faith in God that if he's out there somewhere, that you believe in him. And that's okay if you're there. But I will say, if that's you, that's not faith in God. That's hedging your bets. You've got all your chips on black and you foolishly cast a couple on the red going, huh? I don't wanna lose everything. Hopefully, you know, I know I've built this life for me and it's pretty awesome, but I could be wrong. Like back in the head, so I'll, put a few shackles on red. Let's see if it works out. That's called hedging. That's not faith. You're not saved through hedging. You saved through specific faith.

Second thing, faith is relational. Abraham had legitimate relationship with the Father. Legitimate. They talked, they spent time together. He, they went out into the fields. They looked up at the stars together. Remember that? That's, that's a, that's a relationship. We can build our relationship with God too. We confess our sin where we're where we're lost. We, we have doubts. We can tell 'em our doubts and where we're lo where we're messing up. I'm, man, I don't think I'm getting all this like I'm, I'm honestly messing up. God welcomes that.

God, I'm not sure I really believe in you. Okay, tell me about it. That's the sort of God we have. He's open to that sort of criticism and feedback. He's not like us, fickle and petty. He would love to receive that from you. He could give me your frustrations. If you have a loving parent, then the relationship with that parent is strong, isn't it? Because you love them, you listen to them, you know that, you know that they have your best interests at heart. You trust them. They've d they've demonstrated their love for you over the course of many years. That's what God is longing for from you. It's not like God has abandoned you and you're longing for him. It's that he's waiting here going, Hey, I want that welcoming relationship with you. I want you to be able to trust me. I want that. Don't just read about me. Don't just learn about me. Talk to me. I want that.

You know what? You know what the best thing, you know what God wants from you more than anything You. It's not to do a bunch of stuff. That's right. He wants you. God's a good parent. He's better than any of us. You know what's one thing that I'm thinking about this recently? What's one thing that good parents always tell their kids to do? They always say, n kids never talk to strangers. Right? That's what a good parent does. They tell 'em not to talk to strangers, right? Don't talk to strangers. Why not? Why not? Because you don't know 'em. Cuz you've seen a few YouTube videos and you're a little like, you know, like you don't trust them, right? It's hard to trust them when you don't know 'em, isn't it?

If God's a stranger, it'll always be hard for you to trust him too. If you know a lot about God, but don't know anything about your relationship with him, why would you trust him? You're just trusting words on a page. You're not trusting a person. God's a person, not words on a page.

Third thing, specific relational faith is also dependent. The odd thing about believing we can earn our way towards salvation is that that's really an attempt to connect to the cross of Jesus through strength. But the way to connect to the cross is not strength. The way to connect to the cross is weakness. It's actually showing your worst version of yourself. See, we need the cross guys because we're incapable. That's why we need the cross. We must depend on the cross. In fact, Jesus came because you're incapable when you hide your incapability and present your strength to God. One, he's not an idiot. He sees what's going on. But two, you're missing the point of the cross.

The reason the cross is necessary is because it had to do something that you and I couldn't. That's why Paul essentially asked this question, like, how could you earn something now that God gave you already by grace, but now all of a sudden you wanna turn around and start working for it? By the way, you can't earn it anyway. He's so confused. This motif is all over the

Bible. Jesus came not for the healthy but for the sick. His Power is perfected. in my weakness? When we are weak through the cross, He s strong.

The gospel is that you and I were incapable of saving ourselves and Jesus did what for us. What we can never do for us, when we present strength, we are denying the cross of its power. Jesus wants to offer you up everything. But in order for you to receive that, you've gotta show that you don't have it all together.

Maybe you have a friend, maybe it's you. When you see someone who's desperately weak, but they're presenting like, uh, no, but everything is going fine and everything's going fine and everything's going fine. You've had that person and you're like, but I know that the marriage and the relationships and the, the job and actually just, and you just wanna say it, but hey, listen, It's okay that you don't have it together today. And you just wanna tell them I'm, I'm sorry. It's okay. You just want to ugh. Just give them a hug. Like it's okay. This is what Jesus is offering. His power is perfected in your weakness. Paul says, I have a thorn in my flesh and it's driving me to God. Dependency, dependency.

Okay? I want you to know before we end our time, how this blessing will actually literally affect you. Like what bearing does it have on the world you live in? Now, in order to see that, let's go to verse 27. By the way, one of the best verses in all of the Bible: For many of you, as we're baptized in a Christ, having put on Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek, neither slave, nor free, nor male, nor female, for you all are are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christs, then you are Abraham's offspring. Hear me heirs according to the promise.

What does the fulfillment of the promise to Abraham look like in our world today? That people of all tribes, tongues, nations, everything are excitedly and happily welcomed into God's great family. This is what it looks like. This is beautiful. This was always God's plan from the beginning. It was never just for the Jews.

And I do think though, that most Americans, and even in the western world, I think we take for granted the diversity, um, in race and culture and thought and opinion and all of that that we have. I think we, we actually lose touch with the reality that for the most of the world, this is not like, this is not true. Many places, in fact, you could argue most places, particularly in the east in the world, are not diverse. They are not diverse. And so Americans, like oftentimes we sit in judgment of places that don't demonstrate diversity across the world. But I just do want to tell you that human beings are what caused that division. Among us are those. Right?

We're all human, I hope. Right? There's no AI robots in here. Like we're, we're all human, right? This is a, this is which means we cause this lack of diversity that God is trying to put back into place. The reason you sense a lack of diversity is hard for you is because you're made of the image of likeness of God. And you desire to see all people come together, all men and women coming together, people of rich and poor coming together. You long for that in the deepest part of your soul. But humans cause this problem.

Genesis chapter 11, human beings because of their sin devise such a plan. So debaucherous and so, so evil that God had to say, you know what? They're building a tower to their own glory. They're about to do a bunch of horrible stuff. You know what I need to do? I gotta knock this tower down and need to scattered these people around because if I don't, they're gonna commit unspeakable evil. And that's saying a lot, given some of the other events in the Old Testament, right? That's saying a lot. They were gonna do some horrible stuff. So they were scattered around. People couldn't understand one another's language.

Anyone here speak, speak multiple languages? Great. Do you speak all of them? No, because we can't communicate with every person on the planet. It was never supposed to be like that way. We think that's just natural human beings caused this problem. This is an issue. But in God's plans to fix the world and to restore the world, he said he would fix this problem too. The diversity we have in the western world is actually Christian in origin. I'll explain.

From the first century. Christianity became responsible for some of the first ever multiethnic and multicultural movements. The church at Antioch in Acts chapter 11, in Acts chapter 13, we talked about it. North Africans, middle Easterners, Eastern Europeans gathered together, tribes, tongues and nations to worship the same God. The onlookers who saw him. They saw that church had no idea what they, what to call them. They we couldn't call 'em by their tongue. We couldn't call 'em by where they were from. We couldn't call 'em by their ethnicity. We had no choice but to call them by the God they worshiped: Christian. First time ever that had ever something like that had ever happened.

The church at Antioch is God's answer to the Tower of Babel post Christ. God is slowly working for all people of all tribes, tongues and nations to come back together to be redeemed and renewed and restored in one day when he comes. This place will not just be filled with rich people or white people or Latino people or football fans or people that speak Spanish. This will be a mix of all types of people. That's the wonderful story of the kingdom of God. Amen. He's gonna do it. Diversity in all ways is possible because of the promise of Jesus. Not for any other reason, not for any other reason.

Now, I just wanna preface, this is not a call to abolish the differences of culture and differences of manhood and womanhood. Differences in vocation or status. Many theologians have tried to use this verse to say, we should all be colorblind or men and women are the same. There's no difference in their role or their gifting. No, no, no, no, no, no, No, no, no. This promise is so much bigger than conformity. Everyone's the same now! Does that sound like heaven?

That's not what God is getting at here. In fact, you can make an argument that that's what the Jews in Galatia were trying to do. Have everyone conform under the same culture to finally meet God. Is that what's happening here? The promise is that God didn't create us to be like one another. He created us to be like him. That's the wonderful news that we can all uniquely be welcomed into God's family. Do you love all your kids the same? I hope not. Why? Because they're all different. Some of 'em need a little love. Some of 'em need a little tough love. We gotta love them differently because they're unique. God doesn't love us all the same, be all the

same. That's the way I'll love you. Does that sound, that sounds like religion? That's not, this is not what he's talking about.

We are all uniquely loved as the multicultural, multi everything family of God. That's the beauty of the gospel. We are all welcome to him as unique followers equally loved and equally united to him in obedient faith. But we are united by a singular point. And the singular point's important. Christ,

Without that point, there can be no unity. Oh sure. You can fake unity. You can like for political reasons or ideological reasons, you can get a bunch of different people together and go, see, we're all the same. Sure. Okay, you could try that. But that would be like stapling an apple to a tree. I don't want fruit on the tree for the picture. I want good roots that grows good fruit.

And the only way you get real, actual good fruit of diversity and multiculturalism and multilingualism and all of these things is by rooting the tree beside a river of life. That is Jesus Christ. That's the only way it's possible. So we can pretend like we're diverse all day till we're blue in the face. It's irrelevant cuz it's not gonna last. Because over the history of the world, all we see is war, civilization destruction, civilization destruction. You need a savior that's right to come back and fix it. And that doesn't happen with us pretending to be happy. It only happens through legitimate actual change.

But let me speak plainly if I haven't already be done that <laugh>, You must place your faith in Jesus as your savior. You must cut out the identities and the perspectives and the ideologies and the points of view in your life that puts you in a fake facade of diversity and love and goodness and kindness and take, pull that away and put yourself right next to Jesus. You do that by the way, not to be saved. You do that to get more of Jesus, because you already are [saved] if you have your faith in him. And if you do that, you're Christ's, you're Abraham's offspring, you're an heir. And then you get all these wonderful benefits of what it means to embrace this beautiful multicultural kingdom that God has presented for us. We're all people of all tribes, tongues, and nations. And we could celebrate one another's differences because guess what? I don't care all that much. We're that different. As long as you love Jesus too.

If, if you're here, you're not a Christian, you can have fake diversity. That's totally possible. You can like get a diversity, equity, inclusion person at your company and like sort of try to manifest it for the stock numbers and all of that stuff. And that can happen. But lemme tell you something, we're living in a massive experiment today. This is an absolute experiment The last 25 years. This is another thing like this has ever happened before. We have no idea where this leads, making men and women the same, making a blacks and whites the same, making uh, rich and poor the same or hating one another for it. Even in our attempts to make us ourselves diverse. We're, we're doing the impossible. We can't, it's only possible in Jesus. You want this real reality where the world is redeemed, renewed and restored. It's only possible by placing your faith in Christ. That's it. That's right.

Okay, let me pray.

Lord Jesus, thank you for my friends. Boy, I really tried to throw my voice out again and I appreciate you trying to keep it going. Um, I know that sometimes it's hard for all of us to really accept the idea that we contribute so little to our salvation. But that's what makes you so good that we have a great savior and a great faith and we can live with great confidence that hey, it's actually not about me, it's about you. And so for my friends that are feeling that hardness of heart sort of chipping away I pray you're gentle to them, you show them your wonderful grace of your goodness, You're gentle to them. For my friends that are hardheaded and stiff neck like myself, Lord, would you, would you give them the nudge they need so they can see, hey, this is about me, not about you. I pray for all of our friends that are on vacation, that they would feel the presence and power of the Holy Spirit even today and wonder what happened today. And for all of my friends visiting who are far from you, and they, they are longing and looking for answers. Would you by the Spirit reveal yourself to them in a way that they have to leave here changed today? We love you, we praise you. We give you all the glory in his name. Amen.