

CHRIST
LIVES
IN ME.

GALATIANS 2:20

How and why to read the bible

Most people open the bible expecting it to tell them how to live a better life that day.

When they read an interesting passage that talks about a foreign idea, they feel like the bible doesn't work!

But that's not how or why we read the bible.

The bible is = God revealing himself to us.

God revealing ourselves to us.

God showing how he's done something about the problem between Him and us.

We predominantly read the bible to learn about God. As we learn about God, we also get to know things about ourselves. And soon we realise how we don't deserve to be learning any more great things about God, because of the way humanity has treated Him.

In the bible we get to see the story of what God has done throughout history to fix the problem between Humanity and Himself.

The problem = Our rebellion against our Maker.
The thing about the problem = To be righteous,
God needs to do the right thing and punish
humanity for their rebellion.

God is conflicted here because God is not
just an angry God wanting to punish everyone
for their wrongs. He is a loving God who
created everything out of the goodness of His
own heart, desiring an eternal relationship with
His creation.

So to be just AND a loving God, he decides to
take the penalty for us. He comes to earth in
the form of Jesus (The son of God) to live the
life we should have (in perfect loving
relationship with God) and stepped in front
of our bullet... Took our punishment = Death!
It couldn't be anyone else but God himself!
The sin was against God, the sacrifice for our
forgiveness had to be paid by God... or us.

But because Jesus didn't deserve to die (having
no sin in Him), He was raised from the dead to
eternal life. God has also made Him the ruler
and judge of all humanity!

God's promise to all humanity is that all who will accept what God has done for them, that is, all who will put their faith in Jesus' death in their place, they will receive eternal life.

They will receive a pardon from their punishment. They will receive not what they deserve, but what Jesus has won for them. An eternal, loving, right relationship with their maker. The way God intended.

And it all comes through faith!

Although, anyone who won't accept it, will pay the penalty for their own sin. God didn't sacrifice Jesus for nothing!

So now when we read the bible, we don't just read to learn what to do today, but we read to get to know our God better. We are in a loving relationship with Him through Jesus who sacrificed his life for us.

So as we know more about Him, and understand more about us, we learn what it is to live life in the relationship we now have with God.

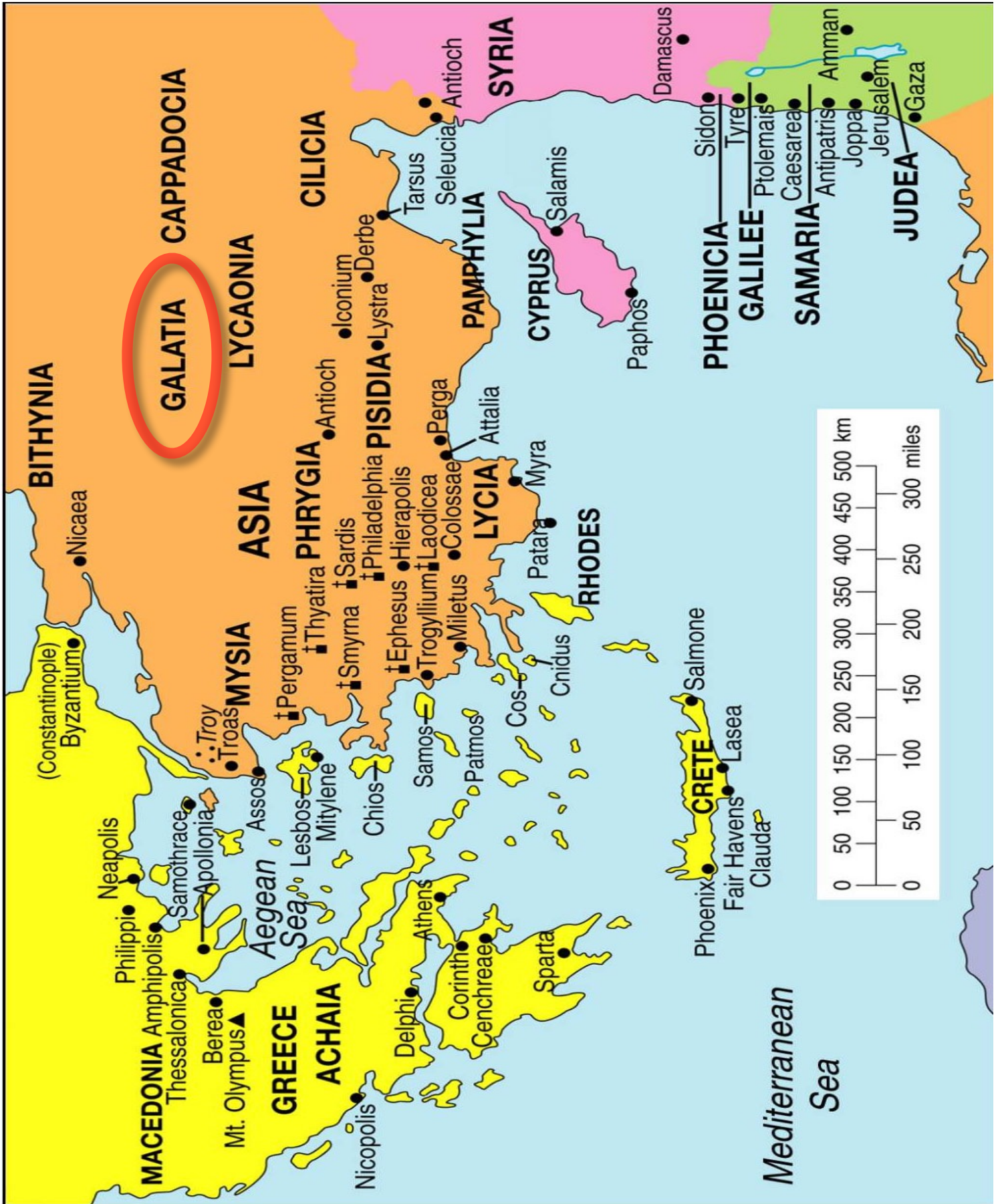
We forsake our life of rebellion and pursue pleasing God, day by day.

Reading the bible takes work, just like any relationship takes work. But knowing what God has put in for us to be in it, and knowing what he's offering us as we work at it, it's far more worth working at this, than any other thing in all of life! Fact is, He made life!

Of course we want to know how to live better lives, but not just for the sake of being "good people". We become good people in response to what God has done for us. It just so happens that the response he calls for, turns us into good people. Again, not just for the sake of being good, but to relate with our God and experience the love He's shown us in Jesus. And also in the hope that other people would come to understand His gift to them in Jesus.

So enjoy getting to know and love your God more, as you work through the book of Galatians.

Where is Galatia and how did they come to get this letter?



Paul had been travelling from Jerusalem through Eastern Europe after his conversion and was preaching the message of Jesus in each town. First he would find a Jewish Synagogue and share the message of Jesus with his own people. Then he would take it to the Gentiles, being convinced from Scripture and from a revelation from the Lord Jesus Himself that the message of salvation in Jesus Christ was for all nations on earth!

In Galatia, the Church was made up of a mix of Jews who had believed the message and Gentiles (non-Jews) who had also accepted the Gospel. Over time, the Jews had drifted back into thinking it was by the Law that people are saved and not purely by believing in Jesus.

They had even been making the Gentiles do things that were part of the Jewish Law like Circumcision and eating and not eating certain foods.

This was creating factions and separating groups in the Church. It had got to such a bad state that there was a clear separation in the Church as to what the truth about God and His Messiah really was!

The Gospel truth was at stake!

Paul writes to straighten things out and to confirm again the good news of Jesus, who brings life and freedom to everyone who believes in Him!

Words with packed meanings:

Grace

An undeserved gift. Great favour shown to someone despite their lack of deserve or merit. In this case, the giving of Jesus to die in our place and take the punishment we deserve from God for our sin.

Faith

An active engagement and acceptance of someone's word. Faith is simply hearing something and actively accepting it.

The Law

The Old Testament Law (Exodus, Leviticus, Deuteronomy, '10 Commandments') This was given to the Israelites, through Moses, after they were rescued from slavery and brought out of Egypt, as a way for them to be God's distinct people.

Peace

To be in a loving and Harmonious relationship. It's not about peace and quiet, but the beauty of relationships without tension.

Justified

Made to be in the right. Declared not guilty. Just-as-if-I'd never sinned. We are declared Justified through Faith in what Jesus did. He took the punishment we deserved and cleared us of our debt before God. Jesus' sacrifice Justified us.

Saved

Rescued from a punishment or bad situation. Saved from God's just judgement on our wrongdoing. Saved from being captive to our own sin and selfish desires.

Cursed

To be separated and disconnected from a good relationship with God. To be apart from his favour and so receive what is due us, based on our wrongdoing (our sin).

Sin

Rebellion and ignorance towards God and what He desires for us in His world. Having no regard for God or having a regard for Him for selfish gain; Distorted desires.

The Spirit

The 3rd Person of the Trinity. Father, Son & Spirit. He is God. He inspired all Scripture, He opens our eyes, ears and hearts to God's truth. He enables us to grow and change. He leads us to, and by God's word, and helps us to turn away from self and turn to God throughout life on earth. He's our friend!

Covenant

A promise or agreement. A pact made by one person with or to another. Mostly meaning the promises God made to his people throughout the History of Israel recorded in Scripture. (Gen 12:1-3)

Righteousness or Holiness

Being morally right in all ways. Being like God in nature and practice. We become righteous through Faith (Faithful response) in God's Grace (His gift of Jesus). Jesus becomes our representative before God. Through Faith, God now sees us through the righteousness of Jesus. And we live out righteousness by following The Spirit.

Blessed

To be in a good and perfect relationship with God our maker. To know Him Fully and to be in His favour.

Gentile

A Non-Jewish person. Jews in the Old Testament saw themselves as a nation and everyone else as a foreigner.

Fruit of the Spirit

These are the personality traits or characteristics of a person who is led by the Spirit of God.

Flesh

Our Bodies. The desires of our physical and emotional selves. This drives practically all our decisions and motives. God's Spirit enables us to be free from living purely for the desires of our flesh, by awakening our minds to God's truth, and by faith, giving us the opportunity to decide to live His way. Righteous, Holy, Free lives for the Glory of God, in response to His Grace.

Zeal, Zealous

Passion, Enthusiasm. A great desire or excitement to achieve something. In this letter Paul is zealous for the true Gospel to flourish, whereas the false teachers are zealous for themselves and their reputation.

1. The Gospel

Read Galatians 1:1-5

vs1-2 Apostle means someone who is "sent". In this case Paul says he was sent by Jesus and the Father, namely - God Himself!

Why do you think Paul tells them how he became an apostle?

vs3-5 As of first importance, Paul sums up the Gospel in these verses, let's unpack it:

vs3 What do we receive from Jesus and the Father?

vs4a What did Jesus do for us to receive this?

vs4b What are we rescued from?

vs4b What does the word "rescued" assume about our previous situation?

vs4c What part did we play in all this?

vs5 And so who receives the glory?

vs5 Is this glory a once off thing?

These verses sum up the whole message of the
Gospel!

Rewrite these verses in your own words as you
would explain it to someone:

When Paul writes these verses, he doesn't mean for
them to be accepted as a one-off good feeling or
as head knowledge. These verses sum how the
Gospel is lived out each moment of each day.
Think through how these verses help us think
through living out the Gospel day to day, hour to
hour.

Reflect on how being "rescued" affects:

Our attitude to "our sin" and "this present evil age"...

Us needing to be "rescued" daily...

Where/who you often direct your glory and how you
can change the direction of it...

How will you live out the Gospel daily?

TIME TO PRAY!

2. The curse of false Gospels

Read Galatians 1:6-10

Revision: vs1-5 Clearly described the Gospel of God's Grace to sinners! That it was God's decision, not ours, that it was Jesus' work, not ours, that all the glory belongs to God, not us!

Paul now starts this section off with quite strong language (amazed/astonished), unlike his other letters that usually begin with him thanking God for them...

vs6-7 What's his problem with the Galatians?

Gospel = Good News! The Gospel of God's Grace is exactly that, because it gives hope to us who could never have saved ourselves from our sin or this world of corruption, let alone the coming judgement day!!

Any message that doesn't completely involve God's saving work on our behalf but tries to add some sort of work done by us is actually no Gospel at all! It's not good news, but terrible news!! The fact is, the problem of our sin and this corrupt world, is not something we can solve! We are the perpetrators of them both! So news that says, you've gotta sort it out to be saved, is actually terrible news because we just can't do that!

Paul preached a message of hope for sinners. Some people in the Church were adding extra works and trying to steal glory for their own gain. Can you see why Paul would have been so stressed about them keeping the true Gospel?!

What are some typical ways people change the Gospel in our day? (adding or taking away)

vs8-9 What does Paul say is the outcome for those who preach a gospel other than the one in vs1-5?

How important is it that we know the true Gospel?

Do you know it well enough? Would you be able to tell if someone changed it or added to it?

How can you make sure you don't stray from the true Gospel?

vs1-10 What's the motivation to know and preach the true Gospel?

vs10 What's the motivation of people who change it?

TIME TO PRAY!

3. The Gospel is God's message

Read Galatians 1:11-24

vs11-13 Linking back to **vs1-2**, Paul now goes on to spell out how this Gospel message he preaches wasn't something he made up, but is from God! He didn't get it from the other apostles, or through the word on the street, he says, "I got it from God!"

vs14 & 23 What was Paul's former life like?

vs12, 15-16a What happened?

vs16 Why did it happen?

vs20 How sure is Paul that this wasn't just a dream?

The use of specific people's names in passages of the Bible adds to the validity of the text we're reading.

If Paul had made up names, the people he was writing to would have known he was telling lies.

Writing people's actual names down give the recipients of the letter proof and also an opportunity to go and ask those people if it's true!

Paul was a bit of a 'big shot' in Judaism before being converted to follow Jesus... And as a Jew, he was giving these Christians hell!

Can you think of any other reason or motivation Paul would have had to change his life other than Jesus revealing Himself to Paul?

Anything...

Reflect:

How does Paul's conversion help us think about people you know who seem "too far away"?

How does Paul's point about the Gospel being God's message help us think about:

- The power of the message?
- The importance of the message?

How will this passage change the way you think about the Gospel message?

Your Testimony is God's message in action!

When was the last time you told someone the powerful message of how God has worked in your own life?

TIME TO PRAY!

4. Confirming the Gospel

Read Galatians 2:1-10

In the Church at this time there were 2 groups of people. Jews who had accepted Christ, and Gentile believers (non-Jews).

The false teaching Paul was concerned with was coming from some of the Jews who were saying that in order to be a real Christian, you've got to also follow the Jewish Law! (Old Test Law)

They were making some Gentiles feel inferior in their faith and some of them were being persuaded to be circumcised, and to do lots of other external behaviour changes to be accepted into this group of Jewish (false teaching) Christians. (vs4)

14 years after Paul was converted, (vs1-2) he had to make a visit to Jerusalem because there were Jewish groups enforcing this same attitude. So Paul went to confirm that the Gospel message he'd received was being properly accepted and encouraged by the leadership there also.

vs5 What would have happened to the message over the years if Paul didn't feel so strongly about it being preserved as the truth that he had originally received?

Do you feel as strongly about the Gospel being preserved as Paul did?

How can we make sure the Gospel message remains as it truly is?

Many people confuse our response to the gospel with the gospel and think that certain aspects of living out our faith are essential to being saved.

(eg. Baptism, Going to Church, Reading the bible...)

What other things in the Christian life could people think we have to do to be saved?

The other Apostles in Jerusalem acknowledged Paul as having been given the task from God to preach the Gospel to the Gentiles. (see Acts 9)

If those who personally spent time with Jesus, acknowledged Paul as having received his message straight from God, how much weight should we put on the words of Paul in his letters in the New Testament?

How often do you thank God for preserving His message for you to hear it? Do you thank Him for the Bible you have? Do you read it?

TIME TO PRAY!

5. Justified by Faith not Law

Read Galatians 2:11-21

Read Acts 15:1-21 for background info.

vs11-14 Peter (a.k.a Cephas) had come to visit Paul in Antioch but had been swayed by peer pressure from the Jews to stop eating with the Gentiles and only eat with those who called themselves "the Circumcision group". They were a group of Jews who were claiming the Gentiles had to follow Jewish Law to be fully justified by God. Saying "faith wasn't enough!"

Justified = Just-as-if-i'd never sinned

Justified = Declared right by the judge

Justified = Seen as righteous before God

vs16 How are we justified?

vs16 How are we NOT justified?

vs16 Will any human being be justified by good works?

vs19a Why not?

vs20b What is our faith in for us to be justified?

vs17-18 What's the argument about here?

Paul is stating an argument here that people say against Christians who claim that faith in Jesus alone saves, and not obedience to the law.

The argument is - If it's only faith that saves, can't you go and sin all you like and just believe you are saved! (Which people argue today). And if that's OK, is Jesus a promoter of sin!?

But Paul's response to this is: (vs17) Absolutely NOT! He then goes on show how if we have put our faith in Christ, we no longer live for sin, or for the law, but we now live for Jesus (vs18-20), and so If Jesus died to rescue us from sin & the law, why would it be ok to go back to living for it!?

Being Justified doesn't give us permission or even motivation to go and sin, but rather the opposite!

How do you view your salvation in regards to sin?

Do you sometimes see it as a free ticket to sin?

Or as your ticket out of sin into freedom?

vs19 & 20 Are two parallel verses.

Compare how (vs19) through the law I have died to the law, so that I might live for God.

- relates with -

(vs20) I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live ... I live by faith in the Son of God..

If we have "died to the Law", and torn it down as a way of being saved, as Paul says in vs18-19; What then is the relationship between the Christian and the Law?

Of course Paul still taught that we should obey the Law. (Not the sacrificial system that Christ fulfilled and did away with, but all the relational parts of God's Law) Not as a way to be saved, but as a RESPONSE to Christ bringing us into the life of someone who has been "rescued" from "this present evil age". He has set us free to live His way.
vs19...I have died to the Law (been Crucified with Christ), that I might live to God.

What's your attitude to God's Law? Are you driven to obey as a way of keeping yourself right with God? Or to live out your new freedom in Christ?

Many Christians think we become Christians by faith and then continue as Christians by keeping the Law... How do verses 20-21 tell us how to continue in the Christian life?

Paul drives his point home with vs21!

"I do not set aside the GRACE of God"

How can we make sure what Jesus did on the cross is never seen as a waste!?

In your own words write out how you would explain to a friend how they can be justified before God:

Do you think there would be people in your Church who profess faith in Jesus but may think they are saved by what they do?

How would you go about helping them understand faith and works?

TIME TO PRAY!

Then turn over for the memory verse

I HAVE BEEN
**CRUCIFIED
WITH CHRIST;**

IT IS NO LONGER I WHO LIVE,
BUT CHRIST LIVES IN ME;

AND THE LIFE WHICH I
NOW LIVE IN THE FLESH
I LIVE BY FAITH
IN THE SON OF GOD,
**WHO LOVED ME
& GAVE HIMSELF
FOR ME.**

GALATIANS 2:20

Write this verse out again and
try to memorise it.

6. How to be Righteous

Read Galatians 3:1-9

Do good people go to heaven?

That's the question at hand in this section. Paul is continuing his argument from the previous passage about how we are justified before God, and now he's adding another level to it. He's getting them to think back to how they first received God's Spirit - By believing the message, or obeying the law?

vs1-3 Paul is quite intensely angry about what's going on in Galatia with this false message... Would you be that angry if you heard people in your Church saying "you've got to be good to go to heaven"?

He reminds them in **vs4** that it's because of the message about Jesus that they've been persecuted. He asks them a rhetorical question here so that they'll remember why they've held on to the message even through persecution... because it's believing it that saves you, not living a certain way!

vs5-9 How does a person receive God's Spirit?

Read Genesis 15:1-6

Was Abraham asked to do anything to please God?

What did Abraham do that made God credit righteousness to him?

How does Genesis 15 help us understand vs7?

Paul makes a point about the Gentiles receiving salvation by faith to show that the law was never put in place to save, but to respond to God's salvation. And that has been clear since Abraham's time!

Abraham - 2000bc - Justified by Faith
500 years Later...

Law - 1500bc - Faith's way of responding

The promise came before the Law. It was always God's plan to save by faith and not by works!

To be "blessed" is to be in God's "Good Books". To be seen as Righteous, Justified, to have God's Spirit.
vs9 How are we blessed with Abraham?

What is our faith in? (think back to 1st study)

Do you often catch yourself trying to earn God's favour by doing good things?

How can you live a pleasing life to God?

TIME TO PRAY!

7. God's promise received by Faith

Read Galatians 3:10-18

Paul's argument continues...

vs10-13 Whenever a section starts with "For" you know it's about to state the point of what's just been said before. (Most bible versions start here with "for")

Get some background info: Read **Leviticus 18:1-5**

then read **Galatians 3:10-12** again

Now note down the problem of the Law:

This raises a serious problem: No one has fully obeyed the Law, this means no one deserves to live...

how has Jesus made living an option in **vs13**?

vs14 Gives us the reason why God made the promise of blessing to Abraham by faith instead of making salvation about obeying the law - What is it?

To make his point about the law not being the way for salvation even clearer, Paul gives this illustration in **vs15-18** about what usually happens with any human promise or agreement.

The point is: You don't just go and change it after it's made!!

God made a promise to Abraham, the Law didn't come in to cancel the promise... This begs the question - Why then was the Law given? That answer is in tomorrow's study!

How does this help us think about talking to people who think they'll get into heaven by the "pretty good" life they've lived?

Being redeemed from something is to have your identity transferred from one place to another. vs13 says CHRIST HAS REDEEMED US from the curse of the Law... and vs14 says it's so that we would receive the BLESSING OF ABRAHAM (WHICH IS THE SPIRIT) BY FAITH.

How might your redeemed life need to change from "doing good things" to relating with God, by His Spirit, in faith?

TIME TO PRAY!

8. What was the Law for?

Read Galatians 3:19-26

The point has been made clear! The Law was never meant for salvation! Not only that, but it also proves to be a curse for people! (3:10 Cursed is everyone who doesn't continue to do EVERYTHING written in the book of the Law) So Paul now goes on to answer the begging question... What then was it for?!

vs19 Has the whole answer! Read it again...

1stly - Because of transgression (sin)

2ndly - Until the one who was promised had come

Again!

1stly - Because of our sin

2ndly - To point to Jesus

Again!!

1stly - For us

2ndly - For Jesus

One more time:

1stly - For us to see our sin and know we are not worthy of God!

2ndly - For us to see Jesus' holiness (perfection) and that He alone is worthy of God! Worthy to save!

vs21 Paul then states what people might argue...

"Does the law do away with the promise?"

And his answer - **ABSOLUTELY NOT!**

What's his reasons in vs21-23?

When he says scripture has imprisoned everything under sin's power, he means: God's word has declared the law, which reveals man's sin: therefore man is trapped in sin by Scripture! For Scripture is God's word revealed and it revealed our sin!

vs24-26 says the law was a guardian - Guiding us to see and believe in Jesus! And now through faith we have become what the law could never make us!

We have become God's children!

Do you think of yourself as being in God's family? A sibling of Jesus and God being your father?

How does this change the way you think about living out what your faith has made you?

TIME TO TALK TO YOUR FATHER!

9. Sons of God and Heirs According to the Promise

Read Galatians 3:27-4:7

Again this section with a "For" ... Here comes a big point!

Remember the context of why he's writing this letter. He's making the point that the Gospel message is the same for Jews as for Gentiles. Salvation is for all through faith in Jesus. Our last study ended with us understanding that through our faith, we have all become children of God!

This truth is going to be built upon in this section. And it's a truth that totally blows our minds!

vs27 What does it mean to be baptised into Christ and to Put on Christ?

(Refer back to Chapter 2:19-20)

vs28-29 What's the identity of someone who has been baptised into Christ and put on Christ?

Reflect:

Have you been "baptised into Christ"?

Have you put on Christ?

How can you be sure?

An Heir is someone who is going to inherit everything their Father/Family owns.

Jesus is the Son of God and the Heir to His throne.

These verses are saying, through faith in Jesus, we have also become God's sons, along with Jesus.

We have died to ourselves, come alive again through faith in Jesus and now we have (spiritually) put on Jesus. Through faith, God sees us like He sees His own son, Jesus!

A brother or sister of Jesus. A child of God.

An equal as an Heir of our Father in Heaven.

Now just stop and reflect on what it means to be a Child and an Heir of God our Father...

In Chapter 4:1-2 Paul uses another worldly example to explain vs3-5. He does this to explain our situation under the Law before Jesus, and then what happened when faith came.

"The elemental forces of the world" are simply the rules and guidelines humanity lives by. These were what we were guided by before Jesus came along. He completed/fulfilled the role of them, for us to now believe in Him, rather than believing in the rules that guided us to Him.

In vs5 What was the goal of Jesus' coming?

vs6 What has God given to all His adopted children?

vs6 What does God's Spirit do in us?

How does a slave relate with a master compared with how a son or daughter relates with a loving father?

How does knowing you have become a child of God, through what Jesus has done for you, change the way you think about relating with God?

How does this change the way you think about:

- Your identity in the world's eyes
- Valuing other Christian bro's and sis's
- Living out God's ways

Knowing that (as an heir) our inheritance is in Heaven, how should we think about accumulating "things" or "treasures" on earth?

God tells us in 1 Thessalonians 2:19-20 that our treasure in Heaven will be the saved lives of other people we've shared the Gospel of Jesus with. The inheritance of Heaven then, is being with our Lord, God and Saviour! It's being in His presence and knowing Him fully. And it's rejoicing with other people who also accepted the message of His grace; Especially those we personally told! Therefore building on our inheritance or "building treasure in Heaven" is knowing God more now, and sharing Him with others who don't know Him, or don't know Him well.

Write down some things that you value as treasures on earth (eg money, worldly status) that may be stopping you or holding you back from living out your new identity and working towards building eternal treasure in heaven.

TIME TO TALK TO YOUR FATHER!

10. Being different to the world

Read Galatians 4:8-20

Our last study left us with the great truth that through faith in Jesus we have become children of God, Heirs of an eternal inheritance and have the Spirit of Jesus dwelling in our hearts to remind us that we really are in God's family!

Now Paul moves on to remind his readers that faith in Jesus is not just something you add to the rest of your life, but a truth that completely changes your life! It's the beginning of a whole new life!

vs8 How does a person who doesn't know God live?

What things did you live for before you came to know and understand who God is?

vs9 What does knowing God reveal about those things we used to live for?

If Paul describes other things that people live for as weak and bankrupt **vs9** (unable to deliver or pay out or satisfy), what is he suggesting faith in God does?

Get real with God:

What things that you used to live for, are you still struggling to let go of?

What things are you still putting in place of God and serving to get some pay off from it, rather than trusting that God's reward is better?

Paul says in vs10 that they've gone back to observing special days, months, seasons and years. He's referring to the Old Testament laws regarding certain festivals at certain times of the year. This is all just part of them slipping back into doing "good works" to get in God's good books, rather than listening to what He actually wanted, which is trusting in His promise of Jesus.

We do the same thing. Not observing festivals, but doing good things that we think will make God think we're good people and deserving of His love (e.g going to Church). Or we go back to living like we did before we were Christians and fool ourselves into thinking it's more rewarding or worthwhile.

In vs17 what does Paul say is the motivation behind why those people in the Church are telling them to go back to living by the law?

How does that help us think about why the world would try to convince us to stray from trusting God, to live the way they offer?

Do you have people around you that tempt you to stray from trusting God to do what they do?

What would you say to them in light of this passage?

How does Paul feel about someone who turns away from the truth of the Gospel to sin or the Law?

vs9b, 11, 15a, 16, 19-20

How do you feel about your brothers and sisters in God turning away from trusting God? Would you know how they were going with their faith in God?

Who might you pray to your father about to help them fight temptation and stay strong in their faith in Jesus?

TALK TO YOUR FATHER ABOUT IT NOW!

Sin & the world always
demands more than it
delivers. It always costs
more than it pays off.

Sin always keeps you
longer than you wanted
to stay, and always
costs you more than
you were willing to pay.

11. Sons of Freedom not Slavery

Read Galatians 4:21-31

Get some background info:

Read Genesis 21:1-21.

Side point from Genesis 21:10-11 - Many people ask how God could be so mean to send people to hell...

Abraham's response to having to send Ishmael away reveals something of how God feels about people who won't respond to Jesus. Saddened!

God has made a way for all people to be redeemed from their sin and reconciled with God, but so many just won't respond. God's heart in that is a hurting heart, as Abraham's was for Ishmael, his son. Just as all people are God's own creation, he hurts that they won't respond to His Love for them.

God says in Ezekiel 18:23 - "Do I take any pleasure in the death of the wicked?" This is the declaration of the Lord God. "Instead, don't I take pleasure when they turn from their ways and live?"

Back to Galatians:

Ishmael was born because of Abraham's lack of faith in God's promise. He was born because of sin, as a slave, through a woman who was a slave.

Isaac was born into freedom, by God's promise. We also will come under one of these women by how we respond to God's promise or His Law. This is Paul's point in this section of Galatians.

The women represent 2 Covenants:
Hagar = Mount Sinai/The Law = Slavery
Sarah = Promise = Freedom

Just as the women represent law and promise, slavery and freedom, we must also choose which one we will be:

Continue relying on our own pride and strength to live a "good life" before God, living in slavery to the Law that stands to condemn us... (2:16, 3:10-11)

OR

Put our faith in Jesus, our redeemer, who laid His life down to give us justification for sin, and His own righteousness before God the father? (2:19-21)

Do you live like you're free from sin and slavery?

What needs to change for you to live free?

See Galatians 2:19-20 again.

In vs29 we see what the "circumcision group" were doing to those who were trusting in God's salvation by grace, through faith alone... Persecuting them!
How/where do we see that happening today?

Do you do that to people who won't obey God's laws?

How might you approach them differently now?

TIME TO PRAY!

12. Freedom to Love

Read Galatians 5:1-15

vs1 Literally means - We have been freed to be free!

Derr! But what does that mean?

This is the essence of Christianity and the sum of life for the believer in Christ!

vs2-4 What does Paul say the life of a person who obeys the law should look like?

And in that, what's their relationship with Jesus like?

vs5-6 What does Paul say the life of a believer should look like?

In vs6 What's the main concern for someone who is a believer in Christ?

Now this throws a spanner in the works of faith ALONE and to being FREE... Who said anything about faith's works!? This then, is what freedom is:

To love, is to be free!

When do you normally feel most free?
Chances are, it's when you're indulging in something
for yourself..... right?

God wants us to realise here, that slavery is being
so concerned with ourselves that we are trapped in
the world of "me". Also known as: "Sin".

God also wants us to see that true freedom is in
giving the gift of love to others. Just as God, who is
the most free being there is, gave us the gift of His
Love in Jesus!

How does that rock your world in terms of the way
you've been thinking about your freedom in life?

Our world tells us over and over that you are your
most important person. And to make sure you're
looking out for Number 1.

But God turns that upside-down and inside-out by
showing us, through Jesus, that true freedom is not
in looking within, but looking out for others.

In vs13 what shouldn't we use our freedom for?

vs13-14 What should we use our freedom for?

What do you use your freedom for?

How will you use your freedom in Christ?

TIME TO PRAY!

13. Freedom = Walking by the Spirit

Read Galatians 5:16-26

The Christian life of freedom can be marred by times of guilt and shame, as we fall back into that slavery of "me, me, me". That battle is with us as long as we are walking around in this body, which is filled with the desire to please itself (ourselves).

BUT WE ARE NOT ALONE IN THIS BATTLE!

We've learned already that God gives His Spirit to all those who put their faith in Him. In this section we'll see how His Spirit helps us live out the freedom He's won for us in Jesus. The freedom to get out of ourselves, and to look out for others.

vs16 By walking by the Spirit, what will we not do?

vs17 What does the flesh desire?

What does the Spirit desire?

Why is this battle going on?

Do any of the traits in **vs19-21** apply to you?

Which ones?

If Paul says that "those who practice such things will not inherit the kingdom of God" and we know we do some of those things... How can we think we're right with God?

There's a difference between doing things and making a practice of doing things. "People who practice these things" are people who continually do them with no regard for how offensive they are to God. Whereas many Christians will be found doing them out of the fleshly battle we face, but trying not to make a practice of doing them! And God's Spirit is helping us make sure it stays that way! vs16-17

The traits in vs22-23 are what God's Spirit helps us learn as we follow Him. These enable us to be God and others focused, rather than "me" focused.

Which ones do you struggle to practice most?

Paul says "if you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the Law" (vs18) and "against such things there is no law..." (vs23) What does he mean?

Cross reference vs24-25 with Ch2:19-20 Is that you?

TIME TO PRAY! then turn over for Memory verse

Memorise: Galatians 5:22-23

"But the Fruit of the Spirit is:

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Faith

Gentleness

Self Control"

Cover up the verse and write it out from memory

14. The Gospel In Action

Read Galatians 6:1-10

The Law may seem like a big load on a person, but the Gospel truth is actually more life changing by it's very nature! After labouring his point, Paul now applies the Gospel to the believers life so that God's children would know how to exercise their freedom properly... In abounding love!

vs1a What should a Spiritual person (person led by the Spirit) do for a brother or sister stuck in sin?

How? **vs1b**

What would your usual response/attitude be towards a fellow Christian who is found to be sinning?
Judgemental... Disappointment... Gossip...?

vs2 Calls us to "fulfil the Law of Christ"! The Law of Christ is His act of Love, by carrying our burdens to the cross. We now respond to His love, by also doing the same for others.

A "burden" could be anything from struggling with sin, to a stressful situation or time in life, to being totally overwhelmed with the pressures of life.

Who do you know that is struggling at the moment?
How could you help them with their burdens?
Should you text or call someone today?

Do you care how others are going with their life?
Or are you so enslaved by your own desires that you
aren't free to show love to others?
How has this letter freed you from that slavery?

In Church, we can often find ourselves trying to be
the "better Christian" and end up competing with
others so far as to look down on them and stop
helping them. vs3-6 are a rebuke that help us come
back to relating with God personally as our father
and so not comparing others, but **loving** them!

Reflect on where you invest the majority of your
time... If you had a graph to show investment in
"the flesh" and investment in "the Spirit" What would
it look like? How should vs7-10 change the way you
think about investing your time?

vs10 How much "opportunity" do you have to do
good...? Especially for your Church family!?

TIME TO PRAY!

15. Boasting in the Gospel

Read Galatians 6:11-18

Paul's gonna bring it home with this last section!

How do you close a letter like this one!?

With all the pressing issues that he's raised with them, how should he end it...?

How else!?! With the Gospel of course!

He starts with a reminder of the motivation behind why this hypocritical, "circumcision group" are so concerned with getting others to do what they want.

Why is it? vs12-13

vs14 Where is Paul's confidence?

How torn is Paul between wanting what the world offers compared with what the Gospel offers?

How torn are you between wanting what the world offers compared with what the Gospel offers?

What's Paul's view of the world and all it offers?

How do you view the world and all it offers?

vs15 Again he slams the Law argument -
Circumcision and uncircumcision mean NOTHING!
What does he say matters?

Not one fleshly way or another... but a whole new
life in Jesus. A new Creation! Again causing us to
think back to **Galatians 2:19-20 & 5:1 & 5:13**

vs16 What's the alternative to following this
standard? (Look back at **Ch1:8-9 & 3:10**)

The temptation to resort back to the Law, or to fall
back into a life of sin, or to make up another kind
of Gospel all stems from one main area.... A fear of
persecution, embarrassment or "missing out" because
of the Cross of Christ.

Many professing Christians have left the faith
because of opposition to the Gospel of a crucified
Lord. Or because of their desire for the world.
In **vs17** Paul calls for a stop to anyone who would
hint at Paul's Gospel message not being worth it
because of the sufferings it brings with it.
Praise God for Paul's perseverance in the face of
severe hardship and opposition!

How will you follow Paul's example to keep the true
Gospel alive, for generations to come?

ASK YOUR FATHER, WHO LOVES YOU, TO HELP YOU!

Prayer Points and/or Reflections

Prayer Points and/or Reflections

Prayer Points and/or Reflections

Prayer Points and/or Reflections

Let us not become
WEARY

IN DOING
Good

for at the

PROPER TIME

WE WILL
REAP A

HARVEST

if we do not give up

GALATIANS 6:9