

THE PROOF THAT A PERSON IS MADE RIGHT BY FAITH

GALATIANS 3:23-29

Galatians 3:23-29 (KJV)

^{3:23} But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

²⁴ Wherefore the law was our schoolmaster *to bring us* unto Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵ But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster.

²⁶ For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

²⁷ For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And if ye *be* Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Galatians 3:23-29 (TLB)

^{3:23} Until Christ came we were guarded by the law, kept in protective custody, so to speak, until we could believe in the coming Savior.

²⁴ Let me put it another way. The Jewish laws were our teacher and guide until Christ came to give us right standing with God through our faith.

²⁵ But now that Christ has come, we don't need those laws any longer to guard us and lead us to him.

²⁶ For now we are all children of God through faith in Jesus Christ,

²⁷ and we who have been baptized into union with Christ are enveloped by him.

²⁸ We are no longer Jews or Greeks or slaves or free men or even merely men or women, but we are all the same—we are Christians; we are one in Christ Jesus.

²⁹ And now that we are Christ's we are the true descendants of Abraham, and all of God's promises to him belong to us.

The question all throughout the Book of Galatians is the question, “How is a person made right with God?”. Those in the days of Paul lived believing that it was “the law that made a person right with God. Thus they lived following the law, trusting the law, believing that the law was their way to heaven. While it is important to keep the laws, Paul drives home a sobering truth that by the deeds of the law shall no flesh be justified. To be made right with God involves “genuine faith”. Not a mere mental assent to believing in God, but “genuine faith” involves spiritual commitment of one's heart and life. How can we know that we are made right with God by “genuine faith” and not works. It is not simply important to “believe something” it is important to “believe the right thing”, “the right way” from God's vantage point.

1. **THE TRUTH ABOUT THE LAW.** Paul, under the inspiration of the Spirit of God declares that there were two reasons given for the law. First, the law was in reality a prison for mankind before the coming of Christ. Before the coming of Christ, man was “kept under” the law. In other words, man was guarded, protected, kept in custody by the law. The law could not redeem man, but kept man in bondage to sin. It was by the law that man saw where he failed, and sinned. While the law could not help man, it did reveal the depth of his wicked heart. The law pointed out to man the deeds of his flesh. The Ten Commandments revealed the depth of depravity of man. Second, it was the law that brought man under condemnation. When a person breaks the law, that law charges him or her with guilt. The law cuts, convicts, of guilty in the human heart...but is powerless to free mankind from that guilt. The law reveals to a person when he breaks the speed limit...but that same law does nothing to help that person who has broken the law. Third, the law is completely powerless to deliver man from punishment from the laws that he has broken. The sobering reality about the law is this...the law reveals and convicts, but is powerless to enable man to keep the laws. The only real hope for mankind is for “One” to come and release him from the power of the bondage that is caused by the law.

Fourth, the law was designed to be a “guardian” leading all mankind to see their need for someone to deliver him from the law's power and its bondage. In the days of Paul, a guardian, usually a trusted slave would have the charge of a child's moral welfare. Each day, the guardian would deliver that child unto the teacher for training, and at the end of the day bring the child safely home. The law was designed to lead us to our need of the Teacher, Jesus Christ, the only One who can free us from the bondage of the law.

2. **THE TRUTH ABOUT FAITH.** The question was asked in Paul's day and even today, "How can we know that faith is enough for salvation?" First, it is through faith that we are caused to think and focus on God's Son Jesus Christ. When a person will focus on the very Son of God, Jesus Christ, who was God in fleshly form, God will honor that faith. It is the Son, that God gave to come from heaven to die for the sins of mankind. If God would give His Son, and allow Him to die, then there is something significant in allowing His death. His death was a completely substitutionary death...meaning He died the death that all law breakers should have died. Yet, the man or woman that will focus on Him, is given eternal life, and that eternal life comes only through "genuine faith". Genuine faith is not merely "mental belief", but "complete surrender to His Lordship by confession of sins". Second, faith clothes us with the His righteousness and sonship. It is through faith, that God declares us "righteous" and "sons". No law can make us righteous nor a son of God. But faith in Christ does. Paul declares the divine reality for all who truly believe...namely "Christ in you" the hope of glory. Since we are clothed with the "righteousness of Christ", when God looks at us, He sees us covered by His Son, and cleansed of all sin. *"For he hath made him to be sins for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him"* (2 Cor. 5:21)

3. **THE PROOF THAT WE ARE MADE RIGHT BY FAITH.** Those in Paul's day were asking, "How can you really know for sure?" No doubt some were wondering...what if Paul was wrong, and then death came. Yet, Paul makes it abundantly clear. First, because of faith Christ makes us one and He makes us whole. To all who have believed in Christ, they will never forget the utter sense of wholeness and completion they feel, now that they have believed in Christ. Paul made it clear that "faith" was what brought all together into unity before a Holy God through Christ. Every person that is a genuine believer has been given the very person of Christ...the answer for all prejudice, hatred and oppression. When a person stands before Jesus Christ, they stand before Him on the same footing as all others...by faith. No person is accepted before God by works, but by faith in Jesus and faith alone. Though mankind may be different in a certain ways, there is only one way that God accepts man...through Christ. The person who will attempt to believe in Jesus genuinely through "true faith" alone will not be ashamed...but will be brought into the very utter presence of Holy God, and find his life changed by the grace of God.

Second, every true stands in the love "of Jesus Christ". When a person is in Christ Jesus, there is little attention paid to color, race, sex, social status. Why? Because through faith we have been made "one" in Christ Jesus. Paul said it best in *Romans 10:12*, *"For there is no difference between the Jew and the Greek: for the same Lord over all is rich unto all that call upon him."* Paul, one of the greatest advocates of the law, found in his personal life a sobering and wonderful difference, after his "faith in Christ". Paul found a love for people that he once hated. He found a sympathy for those he attempted to persecute, and most importantly he found a love for the Lord, the One who's people he was persecuting. "Faith" in Christ to Paul, was personal, powerful, and most profound...and the same holds true today for all who believe.

4. **TRUE FAITH PROVIDES FOR US AN INHERITANCE.** One reality about the law...it cannot provide for anyone an inheritance...but "through faith in Christ" we become "heirs". The Bible declares in v. 29, "And now we that are Christ's we are the true descendants of Abraham. God gave to Abraham the promise of blessings, of God's presence and of leadership to reach the land of Canaan. In the very heart of every true believer of God, "through faith" there is the wonderful real blessings of knowing that we belong to God through Christ. "Through faith" we sense the very presence of God, in ways that are beyond human description. There is the very "realness" of God in our very being with each and every passing day. And we know that the Lord is leading us...as He promised. While we may not understand all the details, in His way, He is leading us to "a new heaven and a new earth" that will arrive at His appointed time. While Abraham didn't understand all the ways of God...one thing is true...His people arrived precisely where God wanted them, at the time God wanted them there. And the same holds true for all "true believers". We will arrive precisely where God wants...and the time He wants us to be there...but it will only come by and through "faith" in Jesus Christ. By believing in His death, burial, and resurrection.

