

Title: Hearing of Faith
Text: Galatians 3: 1-5
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Galatians 3: 1: O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you? 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? 3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh? 4: Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain. 5: He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Our subject is: The Hearing of Faith

We have been studying in Ephesians the importance of speaking the truth in love. The apostle Paul wrote Ephesians and here we have him doing just that in Galatia. The apostle Paul did what Christ's faithful ambassadors do. He spoke the truth in love.

Speaking the Truth in Love

It was how the Galatian believers had been born-again by the Holy Spirit in the first place. Paul had been used of God to preach the gospel of the faithfulness of Jesus Christ to the Galatians. He said, "**before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been EVIDENTLY set forth, crucified among you?**" That is what it is to preach the gospel of the faithfulness of Christ. It is setting forth Christ Jesus before our hearers, evidently--"graphically." It is to preach the person of Christ and work of Christ in such clear language that the hearers cannot possibly misunderstand; it is to preach the faithfulness of Christ with such plainness of speech that it is as if Christ were being crucified right before their eyes in their very midst. By hearing of the faithfulness of Christ Jesus, by hearing that sinners are made righteous only through faith in Christ, Christ sent forth the Holy Spirit and many at Galatia were regenerated and given faith to believe.

Paul continued even now to speak the truth in love. Paul spoke the truth by declaring exactly what false gospels do, they bewitch--**Galatians 3: 1: O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you.** It means to fascinate by false representations. By false representations, men who preach a false gospel, fascinate their hearers. They fascinate the fleshly man—their message appeals to the unregenerate, old, dead man of the flesh. They fascinate the flesh by teaching men that in addition to faith in Christ they must now mortify the sinful deeds of the flesh and become more moral in the flesh by keeping the law. This was a totally different message than what the Galatians had begun hearing Paul preach. Paul preached "the hearing of faith"—the faithfulness of Jesus Christ, urging sinners to faith in Christ for righteousness in justification as well as righteousness in sanctification. These men preached "the hearing of works"—they preached the works of the law that they must do to become more sanctified.

Paul spoke the truth in love, not only telling the Galatians they were bewitched, he told them what such preaching does—**Galatians 3: 1:...that ye should not obey the truth.** To obey such false doctrine is to turn back to the law and thus cease obeying the Truth. Paul did not say that such falsehood is only in error on certain points of essential doctrine, he called it "another gospel, which is not another."

Galatians 1: 6: I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel: 7: Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

Paul's response was not today's promotion of phony, sentimental love which says believers ought to embrace those whose doctrine is contrary to the word of God. No, Paul spoke the truth in love. He said,

Galatians 1: 8: But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed. 9: As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

Galatians 5:12: I would they were even cut off which trouble you.

For such bold declarations to be in the inspired word of God, it teaches the believer that false doctrine is to be avoided above all things.

Furthermore, we see in Galatia what happens when we cease to obey the truth. Paul spoke the truth in love telling them that by taking their affection off Christ they began examining each other which resulted in backbiting and devouring one another. This is always the result when sinners are taught to look to self for any aspect of salvation rather than believing on Christ in whom the believer is complete. He told them the only cure is instead of looking to one another, set their affection on Christ and they would not fulfill this lust of the flesh.

Galatians 5: 15: But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another. 16: This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.

Works of the Law or Hearing of Faith?

So Paul had preached "the hearing of faith" and but they were listening to the "the works of the law." So Paul asks a few questions. **Galatians 3: 2: This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?**

It was by the hearing of the faithfulness of Christ that God sent the Holy Spirit and gave them life and faith in Christ. That is what the "hearing of faith is", it is the hearing of the faithfulness of the triune God in Christ Jesus. Paul answers his question a few verses later,

Galatians 3: 6: Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness....8: And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

Abraham heard "the gospel"—the "hearing of the faithfulness of Christ." In the gospel which was preached to Abraham, he heard that through his children's, children's, children, the Christ would be born in the earth. He heard that by the faithfulness of Christ all the elect of God from every nation on earth would be blessed. Through the "hearing of Christ's faithfulness" God sent the Holy Spirit, gave Abraham life and he believed God. And God imputed the righteousness of Christ to Abraham through faith. Abraham could not have heard "the hearing of the works of the law" because the law was not given for 430 years after God preached the gospel to Abraham.

Galatians 3: 17 And this I say, that the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul, that it should make the promise of none effect.

It was by the same message that Abraham heard—"the hearing of the faithfulness of Christ"—that the Galatians were given the Holy Spirit, made righteous and sanctified, through faith in Christ. So Paul asks,

Galatians 3: 3: Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?...5: He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Paul says since sinners are not regenerated by the works of the law or by the hearing of the works of the law but only by the Holy Spirit through the hearing of the faithfulness of Christ and him crucified then it is foolish to think that we shall be grown in grace by “hearing the works of the law” or “by our fleshly law-keeping.”

So now, brethren, I want to set Christ graphically—evidently—plainly before you and show you how we are made to put off the old man and put on the new man; how the old man is mortified and the new man edified. It is not by the hearing of the works of the law.

Proposition: Christ is the Truth. If we would begin obeying the truth, continue obeying the truth and be grown by the truth then we must begin by hearing the faithfulness of Christ the Truth and continue hearing the faithfulness of Christ the Truth.

The same thing that had happened in Galatia is what Paul was warning the church at Colosse to beware of.

Colossians 2: 4: And this I say, lest any man should beguile you with enticing words. 5: For though I be absent in the flesh, yet am I with you in the spirit, joying and beholding your order, and the stedfastness of your faith in Christ. 6: As ye have therefore received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk ye in him: 7: Rooted and built up in him, and stablished in the faith, as ye have been taught, abounding therein with thanksgiving. 8: Beware lest any man spoil you through philosophy and vain deceit, after the tradition of men, after the rudiments of the world, and not after Christ. 9: For in him dwelleth all the fulness of the Godhead bodily. 10: And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

I. FIRST, BY CHRIST’S FAITHFULNESS HE PUT OFF THE OLD SINFUL MAN FOR HIS PEOPLE—Colossians 2: 11: In whom also ye are circumcised with the circumcision made without hands, in putting off the body of the sins of the flesh by the circumcision of Christ: 12: Buried with him in baptism,

For God’s elect, Christ put off our body of sins, our old man of flesh, when he took our sins and died under the justice of God on the cross. Old testament circumcision typified the putting off of the old, defiled, polluted man of the flesh which Christ accomplished on the cross. This is the circumcision Christ accomplished. Our old man of sins was put off without our hands, without any sinners hands. This text says our old man of sins—the whole body of our sins—was put off by Christ on the cross.

Our old man was buried with him in baptism. Baptism spoken of here is the baptism Christ was baptized with when he was immersed in the judgment and justice of God for the sin of his people which he was made as our Substitute, when his lifeless body was buried in the tomb.

Water baptism is not a new testament version of old testament circumcision. Old testament circumcision pictures the putting off of our old man of sins. Water baptism pictures the burial of our old man with Christ and rising again our new man with Christ when he was arose from the grave to the right hand of God.

This is the hearing of faith. Believer, does this message not fill your inner man with strength to know your old man of sins is destroyed? God remembers our sins no more. The old man of flesh which does all the sinning in you and I, who believe, is crucified, dead and buried before the all-knowing eye of God our Judge.

God regards your old man as dead. So you regard your old man as dead. The fleshly deeds of our old man neither count against us or for us. He is dead. So you mortify him—treat him as dead. This is the message that makes us not serve sin—not the hearing of the works of the law. Let me show you that.

Romans 6:1: What shall we say then? Shall we continue in sin, that grace may abound? 2 God forbid. How shall we, that are dead to sin, live any longer therein? 3 Know ye not, that so many of us as were baptized into Jesus Christ were baptized into his death? 4 Therefore we are buried with him by baptism into death: that like as Christ was raised up from the dead by the glory of the Father, even so we also should walk in newness of life. 5 For if we have been planted together in the likeness of his death, we shall be also in the likeness of his resurrection: 6 Knowing this, that our old man is crucified with him, that the body of sin might be destroyed, that henceforth we should not serve sin. 7 For he that is dead is freed from sin. 8 Now if we be dead with Christ, we believe that we shall also live with him: 9 Knowing that Christ being raised from the dead dieth no more; death hath no more dominion over him. 10 For in that he died, he died unto sin once: but in that he liveth, he liveth unto God. 11 Likewise reckon ye also yourselves to be dead indeed unto sin, but alive unto God through Jesus Christ our Lord. 12 Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof. 13 Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God. 14 For sin shall not have dominion over you: for ye are not under the law, but under grace.

II. SECONDLY, BY THE FAITHFULNESS OF CHRIST, OUR NEW MAN WAS RAISED WHEN CHRIST WAS RAISED—Ephesians 2: 12: Buried with him in baptism, wherein also ye are risen with him through the faith of the operation of God, who hath raised him from the dead.

This is the second thing water baptism pictures. Every elect child of God in the eye and purpose of God was raised a new man when God raised Christ from the grave to the right hand of the Father.

Before you and I were born the first time from our mother's womb, before we were born-again by the Holy Spirit, before the all seeing eye of God, the new me was born when Christ came out of the grave and sat down at his right hand.

Ephesians 2: 5: Even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved;) 6: And hath raised us up together, and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus: 7: That in the ages to come he might shew the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus.

There is no possibility that God will fail to regenerate and bring his redeemed to faith in Christ because he raised Christ “that in the ages to come he might show the exceeding riches of his grace in his kindness toward us through Christ Jesus”

This is the “hearing of faith”—it is hearing that I have been risen a new man in Christ since the time that Christ arose. This is what makes the believer no longer regard the old man of flesh—which makes us not want to continue in sin—the sin of looking to our flesh for morality or immorality.

Colossians 3: 1: If ye then be risen with Christ, seek those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God. 2: Set your affection on things above, not on things on the earth. 3: For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God.

III. THIRDLY, BY THE FAITHFULNESS OF CHRIST, HE SENT THE GOSPEL AND THE HOLY SPIRIT TO YOU WHO BELIEVE AND QUICKENED US TO LIFE THROUGH THIS VERY

TRUTH—Colossians 2: 13: And you, being dead in your sins and the uncircumcision of your flesh, hath he quickened together with him,

We were dead in sins. Our old man was dead and he is still dead. But Christ quickened us together with him. Christ was formed in us. By his life within us there is now a new man within us. One with Christ: Christ in you and you in Christ

Through faith he revealed to us that God **Colssians 2: 13: “has forgiven you all trespasses;** “All—means past, present and future. The old man is dead. The wages of sin is paid to justice by Christ. Therefore all our sins are forgiven

Also, Christ reveals that the law no longer has anything to say to us—**v14: Blotting out the handwriting of ordinances** [the dogma—the whole law of God--]**—that was against us, which was contrary to us, and took it out of the way, nailing it to his cross;**

Christ fulfilled the law in the room and stead of his people. So it is not established for all who believe—for you who believe. You are not under the law.

Romans 10:4: Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth.

Christ did all of this work: on the cross and within his people stealing you from your captors and making you his—**Colossians 2: 15: And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.**

Now doesn't this hearing of faith strengthen your inner man? Doesn't the old man appear truly dead to you? He is before God. God says now you reckon it to be so.

IV. LASTLY, PAUL SAYS, THEREFORE LET NO MAN BRING YOU BACK UNDER THE LAW FOR SANCTIFICATION. YOU WILL BE GROWN IN GRACE THE SAME WAY YOU BEGIN IN GRACE—BY THE FAITHFULNESS OF JESUS CHRIST THROUGH THE HEARING OF HIS FAITHFULNESS—Colossians 2: 16: Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holyday, or of the new moon, or of the sabbath days: 17: Which are a shadow of things to come; but the body is of Christ. 18: Let no man beguile you of your reward in a voluntary humility and worshipping of angels, intruding into those things which he hath not seen, vainly puffed up by his fleshly mind,...

Do not tolerate people trying to rule your life by ordering you to bow and scrape under the law, do not listen to men insisting that you join their obsession with angels and that you seek out visions. They are a lot of hot air, that's all they are.

Colossians 2: 19: And not holding the Head, from which all the body by joints and bands having nourishment ministered, and knit together, increaseth with the increase of God.

They are completely out of touch with the source of life, Christ. He puts us together in one piece, in his body. His very breath and blood flow through us by his Spirit being in us. He is the Head and we are the body. We grow up healthy in God only as he nourishes us.

The old man is mortified one way. It is by the faithfulness of Christ who grows us through the hearing of the faithful works of Christ.

Galatians 2: 20 I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. 21: I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Remember, it is the old man of flesh that would have us turn from Christ to ourselves, be it to mortify the evil deeds of our flesh or to make our flesh more outwardly moral. If we do so then we have ceased to obey the Truth. So put off that old man and put on the new man by obeying the Truth. The Truth effectually commands us in the inner man to look to and rest in Christ alone in whom believers are complete. (Col 3: 1-11)

Amen!