

## The Inward Jew

Genesis 17:1-14

Galatians 3

Responsive Psalm 33:1-12

This morning we are jumping back into Romans. WE will be focusing this morning on the last half of chapter 2, Last time we were here a few weeks ago we looked at the first half of chapter 2 which Paul sets forth a warning, and a testing of faith dealing with the issue of law keeping without faith, basically a justification by works. Just as much today, as it was in the day of Paul the self righteous, law minded individuals were haughty, puffed up, proud, and arrogant, seeking their own gain, and reveling in their supposed holiness, and in pride and arrogance looking down upon all others who are not the same. “Professing to be wise, they became fools.” IF anyone is putting their hope, and faith in anything other then the resurrected savior, they are still lost in their sins. We humans live in this temporal world, we deal with what we can touch, taste, see, and hear. We experience this life through those senses, and sometimes we get caught up in the physical outward looking appearance of Christianity, becoming like the Pharisee's puffed up, and arrogant in our supposed holiness. We must guard against becoming so focused on the outward appearance of faith that we become deceived by it.

Changing the object and focus of our faith from Christ, to a focus upon an outward appearance of purity and morality. This I think is a danger with our Reformed brethren, yes, there is much teaching about the faith and new birth as a necessity, and only means of salvation, but after one comes to faith the focus quickly shifts upon living out your life under the morality of the mosaic law. The words of Paul in his letter to the Galatians rings out, “Are you so foolish? Having begun in the spirit, are you now being made perfect in the flesh?” Of course we all know the answer to that question, but though many will rightly answer no, they still turn to the law as a moral guide and seek to live it out, trying to find righteousness through that which has faded and passed away. Seeking hope in what Paul called in 1 Corinthians the ministry of death, for the laws power, is a power of condemnation, a revelation and picture of God's holiness, and stands as a measure to show man that there is no merit that can be gained toward God through good works, through law keeping, because as Jesus pointed out on the Sermon on the Mount, there is none who can keep this law, we have all failed, and it has condemned us, our righteousness is only found in Him who was able to fulfill the law on our behalf and by his death paid the price for our sin's having been nailed to the cross so that we, through faith, by the spirit might be set free from the condemnation and judgment of sin and the law.

Looking back at Galatians 3 again, verse 5. “Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he does it by the words of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Just as Abraham Believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” Another common misunderstanding of scripture from our Baptist brethren, many like to break the bible up into sections, or dispensations and argue that God worked with his people in various different ways, the implication of such belief is that God had offered 2 ways of salvation, many will argue against that terminology but in practice live it out, and some embrace that idea teaching that salvation was given through the Mosaic Law, but that having failed, God then sent his Son to die on the cross. But as we see in scripture this simply is not the case, again looking at Galatians chapter 3, verse 16 “ Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say to seeds as of many but as of one, and to your seed who is Christ. And this I say that the law which was 430 years later cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of the promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

God's salvation which was given to mankind has been, and always will be by faith alone. Abraham who was hundreds of years before the law was given was justified by faith. How do we know this? Where does Paul, get this idea that Abraham was justified by faith, apart from the law? The answer to that is in Genesis 15:4 "And behold, the word of the Lord came to him, saying This one shall not be your heir, but one who will come from your own body shall be your heir. Then he brought him outside and said, look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them. And he said to him So shall your descendants be. ( and here it is verse 6 ) Then Abraham went and followed each law that which was given to him....no, he believed the lord, and his faith and belief was accounted to him for righteousness." Faith, and faith alone, was operating in the say of Abraham just as it is today. Abraham did not find righteousness by looking forward to a law which was to come hundreds of years later, just as we are not to find justification and righteousness by a law that came thousands of years before. The centrality of this faith, and scripture is Christ, for those in the old testament he was the promised seed of Abraham, the messiah, who would come and deliver his brothers, and likewise to us, it is Christ, the promised offspring and messiah who was sent from God to reconcile us to him.

And all who are of the faith of Abraham are offspring's of Abraham, you and I who are of this faith, are one of the many promised offspring's of Abraham. Back to Galatians 3, verse 6" Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to hi for righteousness. Therefor know that only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham. ( think of the controversy of that statement. Only those who are of faith are the sons of Abraham, yet there were generations of his physical descendants who were relying upon their genealogy, and the law as their righteousness before God, but Paul says, they are not the promised sons, it is those who are of faith, those who believe God and follow Christ are the son's of Abraham and the heirs of the promised kingdom...and yes, that includes us gentiles, continuing on verse 8 ) And the scriptures foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying In you all the nations shall be blessed. So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham."

There is one salvation, there is one faith, and it is through the promises given to Abraham that the messiah has come, to work out God's salvation plan which was established from the beginning so that by faith just as Abraham was, we too may be found justified and righteous before God. So, you might ask, what is the significance of all this in our passage this morning in Romans. In chapter 2, Paul sets up this dichotomy, between those who live by the law, and those who are justified by faith, so I thought it important to take a look at the promise given to Abraham, and point out that salvation is by faith, and not by adherence of the law, and indeed as we will see in our passage this morning.. it is those who are of faith, are those who fulfill the righteous requirements of the law, but not of ourselves and our own ability, by only through Jesus Christ. While our focus this morning will be on verse 17 and beyond, since its been a few weeks and it builds context I want to go ahead and read starting in verse 1. ( read Romans 2:1-29 )

Paul is writing here showing that there is so much more to this faith then the morality aspect. Sure, of course there is a morality aspect, for we are to conduct ourselves as those who have been born again, putting aside the old man and living as a new creature. Should we as God's children continue in sin? Should we who have been set free from the condemnation and bondage of sinful rebellion continue it in? Of course not, we should strive as one running a race to win the prize, having our conduct be driven by our faith, but our conduct is not dictated by the adherence of any law, but rather flows out of the heart of those who have been changed by the spirit. We who are of Christ do not strive to live worthy of our calling to gain merit before a perfect and holy God, but rather we strive to live worthy of the one who has called us because we love him.

We are his obedient children, who do so because we love the father. Jim has been talking about the glory of Christ, his connection with the Father, and how he prayed that we may also know that Glory. Those who are in Christ, have this connection with God as well, we have the spirit of God operating within, we have been given the mind of Christ to think God's thoughts after him, that is our hearts and our minds have been changed, from rebellion to love, from selfishness to selflessness. Paul describes it like this again in his letter to the Galatians, chapter 5:22 “But the Fruit of the Spirit, notice he says it is the fruit of the spirit, it is the actions and attitude flowing out from the spirit which is working in us to have love, joy, peace, long suffering, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control....and he doesn't say it is these who follow the mosaic, law, no he says that against such there is no law, against such stands to condemnation, no judgment because, verse 24 “Those who are Christ's have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. IF we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

This is what Paul is meaning here in Roman's 2, Glory, Honor and peace to everyone who works what is good the Jew first, and also to the Greek. There is no partiality in God, verse 12 of chapter 2, “For as many who have sinned without the law will also parish without the law, and as many who have sinned in the law will be judged by the law.” All will be judged, sin shall be punished, and all will be held accountable for their own rebellion against God. Whether a Jew who was given the law, or a gentile who has lived without it, all stand condemned before God for it is their own rebellion and sinful nature against God that condemns them. But likewise the opposite is true, verse 14 “ For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these although not having the law, are a law to themselves.” The key to understanding this passage is to see it through the light of what we have been talking about this morning. The law has been fulfilled by Christ, who as suffered and died in our place taking that righteous punishment of our sinfulness and rebellion against God upon himself and imputing, or setting it to our account,so that we may be holy and without blemish. And we, who have this calling, who love and follow our savior have the Spirit working within us to will and to do that which is pleasing to the Lord. We then, in a fashion follow God's law through the Spirit, for it is he working through us so that we may conduct ourselves as ones worthy of Christ. We are not justified by merely rule and law keeping, but our justification in Christ makes us holy and righteous and that is apart from the Mosaic Covenant and the laws given to Israel,

The key is verse 15, “it is those who show the work of the law written on their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing themselves. As Tom Holland wrote in his commentary of Roman's “Paul is acutely aware there are many Gentiles who are more righteous in their lives then his fellow Jews. He states that some Gentiles are living to a higher moral standard then some Jews, showing that there is another law in operations which brings about this behavior. This is why he states, “they are a law for themselves” This does not meant that they are lawless, or making up their own laws, Paul goes on to explain that God has put the unwritten law into the hearts of all people which nullifies any claim of innocence on the grounds of ignorance. This is the law of conscience which Paul has already discussed in chapter 1. There he argued that nature itself bears witness to man of his creator and that this is apparent to all who do not harden their hearts. Verse 16, “In the day when God will judge the secrets of men by Jesus Christ, according to my gospel.”

Those who followed the Mosaic law, were focused and obsessed upon the outward nature of it's obedience. But Christ came and blew that thought out of the water on the sermon on the mount, showing that it was never about the outward man, it was never about a mere reforming ones life to conform to some outward morality and piety, but it is about the inward man, it is the heart and thoughts that condemn, for it is out of them which flows the actions. If that being true, even actions of morality and piety can then be an area of sinfulness, even following the Mosaic law to the letter as Paul claimed he had, only works in one a sort of pride and arrogance of their own self righteousness. That is why the work of God is inward working out, and not as the Jews believed in the law, outward working in. In the day of judgment God does not judge merely on our actions, but on the secret things of man, the inward man. God looks upon the heart, seeking the root, and the core, looking to see if Christ has been written upon it, and if Christ is found we may stand before him as sons and daughters, but if Christ is not found, we stand condemned before an almighty and righteous God. Believing in God, trusting in him is not a mere reformation of life, it is a life changing explosion that happens within.

In the following verses, this last half of chapter 2 in Romans Paul continues this comparison, between those who have the outward law, and those who have the law written upon their hearts. Verse 17-25 he shows the failure of those who are looking to the law as their justification. "Indeed you are called a Jew, and rest on the law, and make your boast in God...already we can see the problem here can we not? Resting on the law as their righteousness, boasting before God in their own ability to walk in it, verse 18, and you know his will, and approve the things that are excellent, being instructed out of the law, and are confident that you yourselves are a guide to the blind, a light to those who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, a teacher of babes, having the form of knowledge and truth in the law. You, therefore, who teach another, do you not teach yourself?" Verse 21 "You, therefore who teach another, do you not teach yourself? Who who preach that a man should not steal, do you steal? You who say, Do not commit adultery, do you commit adultery? You who abhor idols, do you rob temples? You who make your boast in the law, do you dishonor God through breaking the law? For the name of God is blasphemed among the Gentiles because of you, as it is written."

We could no go over to Jesus sermon on the mount and show, yes, yes, these teachers who have set themselves up as an authority of the law, do indeed break the law. For you have heard it said, do not murder, but I say unto you, anyone who is angry at their brother without a cause has committed murder. You have heard it said, do not commit adultery, but I say unto you any man who looks at a woman to just for her has already committed adultery in his heart. Though outwardly the scribes, and pharisee's may appear righteous, set themselves as an authority to teach others how to be holy and just, were in fact condemned by the very law they sought to keep, for God does not merely look upon our outward actions, but rather upon the heart from which those actions flow. Paul is showing the hypocrisy of the Jews, and in doing so he is seeking to shake them out of their complacency. Jews rely heavily upon their lineage, and the law, seeing their Jewishness as being their justification before God, and their law keeping as the distinctive that sets them apart. Look at verse 25, "For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law, but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision" Jesus has shown that all are breakers of the law, that there are none who could truly keep it, for the reality is it isn't about physical reformation, but it is about the heart. You may appear to be holy, but inwardly are dead and rotten, which is the analogy he made when addressing the law keepers, he likened them to whitewashed tombs, beautiful, and clean on the outside, but rotten and full of dead men's bones on the inside.

Being a Jew itself brings no merit before God, for God shows no partiality, whether Jew, or Gentile, slave or free, rich or poor, if we have not Christ, we stand before him condemned for we are, and never were able to keep God's law in and of ourselves. We are not able to whip up enough righteousness in our own actions to fix the rot and death that reigns in our hearts. Paul has showed, and points out that all have broken God's law, and if you have broken God's law, even the physical sign of the covenant given to Abraham accounts for nothing. The true Israel, is not the Israel born of Sarah, but rather the Israel born of faith. Skipping ahead a bit, Roman's 9:6 "It is not that the world of God has taken no effect. For they are not all Israel who are Israel, nor are they all children because they are the seed of Abraham; but in Isaac your seed shall be called. That is, those who are the children of the flesh, these are not the children of God, but the children of the promise are counted as the seed." This is exactly what Paul is getting at here in these last few verses, Circumcision accounts for nothing, being a Jew accounts for nothing, if you do not have Christ, without the Messiah you are lost, and the law, the signs of the covenant account for nothing for you are unable to keep the law and are in need of another who was willing and able to keep, fulfill, and take the punishment on your behalf.

And we, who are gentiles by birth, have likewise been grafted in, through Christ becoming a part of the Israel of God, becoming a recipient of the promise given to Abraham, for it is by faith, not lineage, so through faith in Jesus Christ, we have become children, and heirs with him who will inherit the eternal kingdom at the throne of the almighty one true God. Roman's 2:26, ok, 25 for context, "For circumcision is indeed profitable if you keep the law; but if you are a breaker of the law, your circumcision has become uncircumcision." In other words, as we have shown this morning, there is none who can keep the law, therefore being a physical descendant of Abraham, accounts for nothing...but that isn't the end of the story, verse 26, "Therefore, if an uncircumcised man keeps the righteous requirements of the law, will not his uncircumcision be counted as circumcision?" All those who are in Christ, through Christ have fulfilled the law, for it is Christ who is righteous, and it is Christ who was given so that through him we may be considered righteous. Through faith, in him, we have become the circumcision, we have become Israel, we are those who are the recipients of God's promises. Verse 27, is a heavy one Paul states, that the gentile, the uncircumcised, who is justified by God, who is considered a law keeper because of Christ, will stand in judgment against the circumcised who reject Christ. Lets read it, "And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who, even with your written code and circumcision, are a transgressor of the law?"

The law in and of itself condemns, and all those who are looking to it for their righteousness, and their moral guide are in danger of falling short, and those who look to the law, shall be judged by the law, and those who are in Christ, will stand before God justified, holy, and righteous, not because they have accomplished their own righteousness, but because God imputed, and put forth his righteousness on our behalf. Look what Jesus says in Matthew 12:38 speaking of this very subject. "Then some of the scribes and pharisees answered, saying, Teacher, we want to see a sign from you. But he answered and said to them, An evil and adulterous generations seeks after a sign, and no sign will be given to it except the sign of the prophet Jonah. For as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the great fish, so will the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." ( the sign of the resurrection, showing that Christ is the Messiah who he claimed, showing that he truly has fulfilled what God has sent him to do, and in doing so has made a way of salvation by paying the penalty of our sin, and laying to our account his righteousness. But because he knows they will reject him, look what he says in verse 41, and this is probably where Paul gets the idea that the uncircumcised will judge the circumcised, that the gentiles from birth will be a judge of the Israelites from birth.

“The Men of Nineveh will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, because they repented at the preaching of Jonah; and indeed one greater than Jonah is here. The Queen of the south will rise up in the judgment with this generation and condemn it, for she came from the ends of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and indeed one greater than Solomon is here.” Verse 27 in Roman's again, “And will not the physically uncircumcised, if he fulfills the law, judge you who even with your written code and circumcision are a transgressor of the law? What that judgment looks like I have no idea, personally I don't think we will judge as a court judges over them, but rather the simple fact that we are justified by faith, through Christ will stand as a judgment against them, those who had ever advantage, had the law, and the profits which spoke of Christ, yet rejected him, we Gentiles who have come into the fold without such advantages, it is our faith in Christ that will stand as a judgment against those who reject him. When those who are seeking to find salvation through their own righteousness stand before the judgment seat of God, they will here that fearful phrase, “depart from me, you who work iniquity for I never knew you.” All those who think themselves wise, and worthy will find themselves foolish and unworthy on that day. Yet there are those, both Jew and Gentile, both slave, and free, both rich and poor, who will stand before the throne of God not on any merit of their own but solely by faith in the one who has died for them, knowing themselves unworthy except for the blood of Christ, and the message the will here, is “well done, my good and faithful servant.”

Standing approved of God, those who the world rejected, those who the law keepers and self righteous shunned and turned up their nose at, will be welcomed into that promised land, and that alone is a condemnation to all who think themselves worthy who have rejected Christ. Look what Paul says here, which is the capstone of what he has been pointing out, verse 28, “For he is not a Jew who is one outwardly, nor is circumcision that which is of the flesh; but he is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is that of the heart, in the Spirit, not in the letter; whose praise is from God, not from man.” It is in the Spirit, it is of faith, not in the letter, not in the written law, for those who adhere to a written law seek the praises from men, feel justified in their own actions, but the true Israel, seeks praises from God. This is the promised salvation from God, to have faith in Jesus Christ, to rest upon his work which he has done. Just as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness, so to that is what it takes. Believe, repent, and follow him, and through him we are adopted sons and daughters of the almighty God, the promised offspring of Abraham.

Salvation is more than morality, it is more than living a good life trying to do what's right, it is more than following a list of do's and don'ts, it is more than the outward sign of the covenant, it is a new birth, born out of faith in the one who has fulfilled all that has come before on our behalf. I will close today, by leaving you a few questions to think upon, Do you have this faith? Are you resting in Christ? Or are you trying to find justifications in your own ability. Put all that aside, and instead put on Christ, seek him, and run to him, trust in him, rest in him, as the Psalmist said, “Today, if you will hear his voice, do not harden your hearts.” But instead, repent and believe.