

The Promised Seed

1st Reading Hebrews 9 1-15

2nd Reading Hebrews 9 16-28

Galatians 3:15-18

Last time we looked at the law that was given to the nation of Israel on mount Sinai. Paul hammered home the effect of the law on not only the Jews, but of all mankind. Paul said that anyone who are under the works of the law are under a curse. If you remember we went on to show that the blessings of the law were given to those who kept them perfectly, and not only perfectly, but in it's entirety. There is no division in the law, it was one law, given to the nation of Israel. Paul said that if you fail in one law, you fail in them all and are guilty of the whole law. Never is there any mention in scripture about the law being divided into different branches. This is an important point because many believe today that the law was split, into ceremonial, moral, civil parts of the law. The idea that the ceremonial and civil parts were for Israel, and the moral, mainly 10 commandments are for us today is a misconception. It is creating a split in the law not found in scripture, it is a created idea to make a doctrinal belief system work.

The point of the law, was not to save, but to curse. The law shows what God demands, perfect obedience. This is something that every single person is incapable of doing. We don't have to go long into the history of Israel to see that even they could not keep it. In fact, just after receiving the law they built a golden calf and worshiped it. This is a reflection of our own sinful nature and shows that there is more to salvation then reforming your life, being a good person, or following any set of moral laws. We can not make ourselves holy enough to gain God's favor. And once we have been adopted into the family of God, we do not need the laws to improve our standing, for as Paul has been telling the Galatians, did not salvation come by faith, apart from the works of the law? We are already children, heirs to the promises given to Abraham.

Since the law's purpose was to condemn all who can not uphold it, and the law being a reflection of God's holy order and requirements being impossible for mankind to live by there had to be another way. As paul says in verse 13, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us so that we may be the recipients of God's blessings to Abraham, that through Christ's death we would all become children of Abraham through faith.

That brings us to this week were we will pick up were we left off at verse 15.

Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Through it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Paul here is using a legal binding agreement as an example of God's promise covenant with Abraham.

One example I read showing an example of this type of covenant was about a woman who died and left all her property to a Christian University. After her death, upon finding out that she had promised all her worldly goods to this university they became outraged and decided to contest their mothers last will and testament in court. They argued that the will only meant her personal effects and not the real estate. In the end, they lost their case and with it any inheritance they hoped to gain. They were unable to change the terms of the will, as far as the law was concerned it was settles when she died.

This is the very thing that Paul is making reference to here. If a covenant put forth by man, can be

legally binding, unchanging, and certain, how much more a covenant of God. Paul's argument here is from the lesser to the greater. If the lesser covenant is true and unbreakable, how much more so is God's covenant true and unbreakable.

The analogy of a last will and testament is a good example of God's covenant he had with Abraham. For it was God telling Abraham, I will do these things. It was not a covenant between 2 equals coming to an agreement, but rather it was God, promising Abraham what he will do. Much like a last will and testament is not negotiated and agreed upon by all involved, it is the parent who sets it up, and promises to the heirs what is given. This is the same thing we see with God and Abraham. There was no requirements, nothing Abraham did, it was all God who bestowed promises upon this gentile man.

This covenant was not like the law covenant given to Israel, Unlike the covenant given to Abraham, as a promise, God told Israel do these things and I will bless you. The promises given to Abraham were just that, promises given by God not requiring anything of Abraham. And if you remember a few weeks ago in verse 6, says Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him for righteousness. Abraham had faith, in God that God would be able, and would do all that he had promised.

Abraham's faith Even went to the point of sacrificing his promised Son, knowing that God would not go back on his promises of being a father of many nations, and he believed that God would provide and still uphold his promises even in his son's death,

Abraham believed that God was able raise him from the dead. Think about that for a moment, God tells you to give up something and we fight to hold on to it...but here, he told Abraham to sacrifice his only son, his promised son, his only heir from his own body and we see not one argument from Abraham, he doesn't try to make excuses. He doesn't argue saying, "But God, this is the son you promised how can you take him away from me?" But rather, he silently obeys. Takes his son, takes a knife, a torch, and kindling and walks with his son to the place that he is going to sacrifice him. Abraham obediently, without questioning does exactly what God asks him to do, knowing and believing that God will provide.

None of us have been asked to sacrifice our children, or anything even remotely as important and dear to us, yet throughout our lives and one time or another when God takes something away we like to complain about it. We may argue, complain, and think "well, this isn't fair." Rather, we should be like Abraham and believe that God will provide. As Job said, should we accept good from God, and not trouble? How quickly we forget, that all we have is from God. We are deserving of nothing, everything, EVERYTHING we have is by the grace of our sovereign father. How then, when God asks us to give him what he has given us should we react? With anger? Should we whine like children who just has a toy taken away? Of course not, we should give God our everything, for everything we have is his. He gave us life, he provides for us, and he gave his only Son to die for us. If we really think on that, if that becomes more of a focus in our lives it will change how we deal with trials, troubles, loss, and sin.

Oh how little is our faith. Oh, how we fall short daily. As Jeff Vanderstelt puts it in his book *Gospel Fluency* we are all unbelievers. Borrowing from Chad's message last week about faith. There is the faith that trusts in our own deeds, the faith that trusts our own ability, and the true faith of belief. Like the father who's son that was demon possessed asked Jesus to have mercy. And Jesus' response was, If you believe, all things are possible to him who believes. The father's response was Lord, I believe, help my unbelief. Even as Christians we fall short. We don't always think upon, or believe the promises that

God has given us. We look at ourselves and our failures, the things we have done wrong, the things we should have or should not have said. Our short comings, not having the faith that we should, doubting God's provision, anxious over finances, or relationships, or our children's future, or our health. we complain about the circumstances in our lives. We think of how many times we fail our God, our lack of faith in our lives and if we are not careful we could have a tendency to camp there becoming introspective, dwelling on our sin's, past and present. We forget we are a new creature in Christ. Heirs to the promises of Abraham, adopted into the family of God and ransomed by the blood of Jesus Christ. Those sin's have been payed for we should not wallow in our short comings but rather look to Christ, and praise God for his redeeming work.

How wonderful are these promises to Abraham that we are all heirs to. None are contingent on our work, none of these promises hinge on any law, but are given to those who are of faith. God promised Abraham that in him all nations shall be blessed. Paul says in verse 8, And the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham. So how, through these promises was the gospel preached to Abraham? Well, it was through the seed promise. Paul goes on in verse 16, Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made, He does not say and to seeds as of many, but as of one, and to your Seed, who is Christ.

God promised Abraham that through his offspring, the messiah would come. It was not as the Jews believed that because they were the offspring, or seeds of Abraham then they were God's people. Paul shows here that the promise was given to Abraham and his seed, singular. Not to seeds, not to the natural offspring of Abraham, but to one specific, who is Christ. So once again, this furthers the argument that the promises given to Abraham was more then just a physical nation, land, and offspring but that the messiah would come in whom salvation would be for all peoples of faith, whether Jews or gentiles.

Paul goes on to say, I say this that the law, which was 430 years later cannot annul the covenant that was given to Abraham by God in Christ. That brings us back to Paul's example earlier, If a man's covenant can not be changed, then neither can Gods. God gave his promise to Abraham before the law came. The law does not add to, take away, or change God's promise to Abraham. The Judaizers false teachers were saying that now you have faith, you must follow God's law to be truly justified. Paul shows here again that the law has nothing to do with your justification or salvation before God. Paul says in verse 18, For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise, but God gave it to Abraham by promise.

How this must have angered the Jews. Paul is taking all the promises they believed that were given to them, and instead applying them to Gentiles who are not circumcised, who do not follow the law, who are not part of the physical nation of Israel. And not only that, Paul says that only those who are of faith are son's of Abraham he has even taken away their inheritance. Then to further go on, and say that if you live by the law you are cursed. The Jews believed they were blessed, special people of God because they were given the law, but Paul says if you are under the law you are cursed. It's not hard to see why the Jews hated Paul so much and sought to undermine his teaching.

The effect the Judaizers were having on the church was splitting it, law keeping Jews on one side, and gentiles on the other. But Paul points to the unification of Christ in the promised Seed. All of the nations shall be blessed through Abraham's seed.

So in reality, the gospel of Christ has more to do with Abraham then it ever did with Moses. The Judaizers were very fond of Moses. They understood the law was given to complete the promises given

to Abraham. The problem is the law was conditional, where the the promise's are not. The law says, do this, obey me, but the promise of God says, I will. The promises come to us free, as do all inheritances.

This should be encouraging to us that our Salvation is hinged on God's promise, not on his law and our ability to keep it. Despite our failures, short comings and times of unbelief we are under A promise that was given not earned. And all we can do is trust in it. And the promises we trust in are given to us by a holy, just, sovereign God, creator of all things.