

Lesson 14 – Galatians 3:26-28

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Review/Introduction

Who? What? When? Where? Why? How?

Paul is writing to the Galatian churches who are in danger of abandoning justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. “Grace” is God’s sovereign, omnipotent, supernatural, unilateral intervention in the most hopeless and helpless situations with actions that only He can perform and with the results that only He can produce, all for His glory. The true gospel is all about grace “not as a result of works, so that no one may boast”.

Paul first greeted the Galatians, then started right into their correction and his attack on the Judaizers who are disturbing the Galatians with a different, distorted gospel, which is really not another since there is only one gospel of Christ.

Paul then presented the authentication of the Gospel through the source (God) and its power to change lives (persecutor/murderer to preacher). That same authentication is true for the follower of Christ today. Does your life authenticate the gospel?

In chapter three, Paul begins the doctrinal section of the letter, looking at the defense of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. He began by showing that the Galatians had had a true spiritual experience because they had received the Spirit. They did not receive spiritual baptism through works of the law, but by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Relying on the law cannot bring about Spirit baptism.

Paul then gave an OT Scriptural argument showing that justification is by faith alone. Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness prior to receiving circumcision and before the law existed.

Paul then showed from the OT that those who rely on the law for justification are under a curse. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Paul’s arguments were ironclad. There is no way to refute Paul’s arguments since they are clear scriptural teaching. So, now he anticipated the Judaizer’s response. Abraham was saved by faith they will agree (since the Torah says so). The Judaizers’ anticipated rebuttal is that when the law was given to Moses, the means of salvation changed from faith to law (or faith plus law). Paul refuted this false idea by showing the priority of promise over law.

If promise is superior to law, then what is the purpose of the law? Law cannot save, but was given to take us by the hand and lead us to Christ. The law shows us our need for a savior.

Today we look at another authenticating evidence of justification by faith. Paul has explored the things that the law cannot do: give the Holy Spirit (3:1-5), give righteousness (3:6-9), justify (3:10-12), change grace through faith (3:15-18). And he has shown why the law was given. Now he will show the power of promise to do things that the law cannot do. First, he will show the power of justification by faith to eliminate distinctions.

Before we look at the power of the gospel to change lives through breaking down the sinful barriers of distinctions, let us look at the theology of race. Race is one of the biggest distinctions in today's American culture. "Race" is most often used to classify people based almost solely on physical characteristics (e.g., skin color, eye shape, etc.).

The Bible never uses the word "race". Instead all people are descended from one set of ultimate grandparents, then the descendants of Noah, and then the descendants of those gathered at Babel.

²⁴The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; ²⁵nor is He served by human hands, as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all *people* life and breath and all things; ²⁶and **He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined *their* appointed times and the boundaries of their habitation,** ²⁷that they would seek God, if perhaps they might grope for Him and find Him, though He is not far from each one of us; ²⁸for in Him we live and move and exist, as even some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are His children.' (Acts 17:24-28)

"Nation" here means grouping of same ethnic people. There are differences in skin pigment, stature, and features between grouping of peoples, but we all descend from one ancestral set of grandparents. We are all a part of the human race.

²⁰Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because **she was the mother of all *the* living.** (Genesis 3:20)

All humans are descended from Adam and Eve and are members of one human race with variations in physical characteristics. Adam and Eve contained all the genetic variations that we see in humans today.

Our ultimate grandparents were race-independent. They were humans created in the image of God. They were sinless, with intelligence, self-consciousness, and self-determination. "Race" played no part in their classification as image-bearers. Since all people are unique creations of God and were created in His image and likeness, all should be treated the same based on their created status. We may act differently towards people because of our fallenness (our own sin), but not because of our createdness.

That is the beginning of history when there was no distinction. The end of history of the redeemed shows no distinction either.

⁹And they sang a new song, saying, "Worthy are You to take the book and to break its seals; for You were slain, and **purchased for God with Your blood *men* from every tribe and tongue and people and nation.** (Revelation 5:9)

⁹After these things I looked, and behold, **a great multitude which no one could count, from every nation and *all* tribes and peoples and tongues, standing before the throne and before the Lamb, clothed in white robes,** and palm branches *were* in their hands; (Revelation 7:9)

For the body of Christ, what should the church age look like? Should there be distinctions?

Paul's defense of justification by faith – The power of justification to make family (3:26-28)

1. United in one body (3:26-27)

²⁶For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. ²⁷For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.

²⁶for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith. ²⁷For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. (ESV)

The law cannot make someone a “son” of God. Only faith in Christ Jesus can do that. The Spirit moved Paul to look at the unity of the body as an example of something that justification through faith alone can do.

Paul has been using the third person (3:6-22) referring to those to whom he is writing who had not understood the failings of the law. He then moved to the first person (we) in 3:19-25 lumping himself with all mankind as being held captive under the law. Now he moves to the second person (you) referring to the Jews and Gentiles at Galatia.

The Greek sentence starts with “all” emphasizing that each one of them is a son of God through faith in Christ Jesus. Paul will tell that they all are sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, but will then clarify that it is only those who have been baptized into Christ who are actually sons of God and are clothed with Christ.

“For” indicates a connection to the previous thought of a tutor (child leader or child conductor).

²⁴Therefore the Law has become our **tutor** (guardian - ESV) *to lead us* to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. ²⁵But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a **tutor** (guardian - ESV). (Galatians 3:24-25)

Remember the Greek word that the NASB translates as “tutor” does not have the sense of intellectual instruction. The “paidagogos” was not the instructor of the child, but a slave whose job was to look after the child. He exercised a general supervision over the child’s activities. It was the paidagogos’s job to take the child by the hand and “lead” or “conduct” the child to the teacher who would give him instruction. In the same way, the law takes us by the hand and leads us to Christ. In Paul’s metaphor, Christ, Himself, is the teacher.

But when we come to Christ by grace alone through faith alone, we are no longer under a “tutor”. The reason is that we become a “son of God”.

The idea of being a “son” of God has connotations that have nothing to do with being male or female. We are all sons of God through faith in Christ. We have a place of closeness with God through Christ. We are a member of God’s family as children.

¹Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and whoever loves the Father loves the *child* born of Him. (1 John 5:1)

¹²But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, *even* to those who believe in His name, (John 1:12)

¹⁹So then you are no longer strangers and aliens, but **you are fellow citizens with the saints, and are of God's household**, (Ephesians 2:19)

Even more so, we have received the adoption as sons. Adoption is God's work in making us a permanent part of His family in a privileged place of inheritance.

¹⁵For you have not received a spirit of slavery leading to fear again, but you have received a spirit of **adoption as sons** by which we cry out, "Abba! Father!" (Romans 8:15)

⁵so that He might redeem those who were under the Law, **that we might receive the adoption as sons**. (Galatians 4:5)

⁵**He predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ** to Himself, according to the kind intention of His will, ⁶to the praise of the glory of His grace, which He freely bestowed on us in the Beloved. ⁷In Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses, according to the riches of His grace ⁸which He lavished on us. In all wisdom and insight... (Ephesians 1:5-8)

This place of closeness and privilege is only through faith, not law.

❖ **How are you striving to make your practice of closeness as close to your position of closeness as you can?**

We are no longer under a tutor because we are sons of God through faith in Christ. We are sons of God because each one who has been baptized into Christ has been clothed with Christ. The "baptism" Paul is referring to is Spirit baptism. Spirit baptism is the act where the believer is united with Christ in His death (Romans 6:3-7; Colossians 2:12) and into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13).

³Or do you not know that all of us who have been **baptized into Christ Jesus** have been baptized into His death? ⁴Therefore we have been buried with Him through baptism into death, so that as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, so we too might walk in newness of life. ⁵For if we have become **united with Him** in the likeness of His death, certainly we shall also be *in the likeness* of His resurrection, ⁶knowing this, that our old self was crucified with *Him*, in order that our body of sin might be done away with, so that we would no longer be slaves to sin; ⁷for he who has died is freed from sin. (Romans 6:3-7)

¹²having been **buried with Him in baptism**, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. (Colossians 2:12)

"Clothed yourselves with Christ" has a theological meaning, but also an illustrative one. We are not under a tutor because we are sons. When Roman children became sons and therefore are no longer under a child-leader (tutor), there was a ceremony at which they were given a special toga that identified their status as not needing a child-leader. For the believer, that robe is Christ.

Theologically, in justification God graciously and instantaneously (Romans 8:33) declares the repentant, believing sinner righteous. Your sins are placed on Christ (1 Peter 2:24) and His righteousness is placed on you (2 Corinthians 5:21).

If you are not clothed with Christ, then you are not a believer.

❖ **How does the idea of being clothed with Christ differ from other religions?**

2. Free of distinctions (3:28)

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.

²⁸There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. (ESV)

As we just saw, “all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.” Spirit baptism unites the believer with Christ in His death (Romans 6:3-7; Colossians 2:12), but also places the believer into union with other believers in the body of Christ (1 Corinthians 12:13). Paul now expands on that second result of Spirit baptism.

Upon salvation, each believer is immediately placed by the Holy Spirit into one united spiritual Body – the church.

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³**For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body**, whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

The church is not comprised of people who simply profess to be a Christian nor those who identify themselves with a particular Christian group nor those who may attend a local church. There are many people who identify themselves as a Christian, but who in truth are not (see Matthew 7:21-23 and the parable of the tares among the wheat in Matthew 13:24-30).

The church is the total group of individuals who place their faith in Jesus as their Lord and Savior. The Scriptures are clear that saving faith is faith in the Lord of all. True saving faith is not mere intellectual assent to facts concerning the gospel. True saving faith encompasses repentance (Mark 1:14-15; Acts 20:20-21; Hebrews 6:1), following Jesus (John 10:27-28), self-denial (Luke 9:23-26), forsaking all (Luke 14:15-33), and confessing Jesus as Lord (Luke 6:45; Romans 10:8-10).

❖ **When you meet someone new (at church), what is the most important thing you need to know about them?**

The church is expressed metaphorically as a “body” in several NT passages. This is perhaps the best known of the metaphors. The body figure illustrates the diverse-unity and interdependence that is present in the church. The body is made up of unique individuals who are united by the indwelling Holy Spirit. The many are one body in Christ, with Christ as the head and nourisher of the church (Ephesians 1:22-23; Colossians 1:18; Ephesians 5:23, 28-30; Colossians 2:18-9), and individually members of one another.

The members of the body are united in Christ.

⁴For just as we have many members in one body and all the members do not have the same function, ⁵**so we, who are many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another.** (Romans 12:4-5)

⁴*There is one body and one Spirit, just as also you were called in one hope of your calling;* ⁵one Lord, one faith, one baptism, ⁶one God and Father of all who is over all and through all and in all. (Ephesians 4:5-6)

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. (1 Corinthians 12:12)

If you have been baptized into Christ, you are one body in Christ and you are unified in Christ.

❖ **How do you view the brethren – in groupings or unity?**

There are multiple passages in addition to here in Galatians which talk about the oneness and lack of distinctions in the body of Christ.

¹²For even as the body is one and *yet* has many members, and all the members of the body, though they are many, are one body, so also is Christ. ¹³For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body, whether **Jews or Greeks**, whether **slaves or free**, and we were all made to drink of one Spirit. (1 Corinthians 12:12-13)

⁹Do not lie to one another, since you laid aside the old self with its *evil* practices, ¹⁰and have put on the new self who is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created him—¹¹*a renewal* in which **there is no distinction between Greek and Jew, circumcised and uncircumcised, barbarian, Scythian, slave and freeman**, but Christ is all, and in all. (Colossians 3:9-11)

The lack of distinction, the breaking down of sinful barriers between people, is a powerful testimony to the divine origin of the gospel. There is no place for discrimination within the body of Christ since Christ is everything for the believer, the head of the body, and therefore we desire to honor and glorify Him. Each member of the body of Christ is united through spiritual baptism with Christ and one another.

In Colossians 3, the formulation of “there is no” indicates there is continually, absolutely no distinction within the body of Christ. There is no possibility of distinction.

“Greek and Jew” indicates there are no cultural distinctions within the body of Christ.

“Circumcised and uncircumcised” indicates there are no past religious experience distinctions within the body of Christ. “Barbarian” and “Scythian” indicate cultural fringes of society are not a reason for distinctions. And finally, “slave” and “freeman” indicate social barriers do not exist in the body of Christ.

Regeneration by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone removes distinctions and makes those who were once separated by the sin of bigotry or discrimination (distinction), brethren in Christ.

In Galatians, God says simply that distinctions do not exist (“there is neither”) in the body of Christ. The Greek asserts the impossibility of there existing distinctions. Not only are there no distinctions in reality, there must not be distinctions in practice.

❖ **In thought or action do you treat people who are different than you differently?**

Paul adds male/female distinctions. Since this is an emotionally charged topic and Galatians 3:28 is often used as a proof text for a certain gender-role view, let us take a moment to look at the theology of gender roles in the church. For a more thorough study of this topic please look at “Topic 2 (Lessons 3, 4, 5, & 6) - Ecclesiology - Organization and Leadership”.

❖ **When reading the Bible do you put away opinion and emotion and commit to be a doer of the word?**

Gender Roles

The role of women in the church and home can be one of the most emotionally charged controversies in the church. Though salvation does not hinge on this belief it is important in the life of individuals, the family, and the church.

Among evangelicals there are two main positions concerning gender and roles in the church:

- 1) The complementarian view teaches that God created men and women as equals with distinctive gender-defined roles.
- 2) The egalitarian view teaches that God created man and woman as equals and that true equality demands equal ministry opportunities in the church and equal marital roles in the home.

However, we are not concerned with labels or positions of opinion; we are concerned with what the Bible teaches.

Gender Equality – Equal in Position

The Bible declares that men and women are equal in nature, personhood, dignity, and worth.

²⁷God created man in His own image, **in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.** (Genesis 1:27)

In addition, the Scriptures are clear that men and women have equal access to salvation and in terms of their position in Christ as recipients of the gift of saving faith are equal (Galatians 3:26-28).

Gender Equality – Equal in Nature of Ministry

Throughout the Bible men and women are equal in the *nature* of their ministry.

- Women played a prominent role in the ministry of Jesus and ministry to Jesus (Matthew 28:1-10; Luke 8:3; 23:49; John 11:1-46; 12:1-8).
- No spiritual gift is limited to men (1 Corinthians 12:27-31; Romans 12:3-8; 1 Peter 4:8-11).
- Spirit-filled women allow the words of Christ to richly dwell within them and are empowered with all wisdom to teach and admonish (Colossians 3:16).
- Additionally, women are commanded to edify the body of Christ, which includes teaching (Titus 2:4) and in the early church prophecy (Acts 2:17-18; 21:9; 1 Corinthians 11:5).

While the Scriptures teach that men and women are equal in the *nature* of their ministry, they also teach a distinction in the *sphere* of their ministry. The Scriptures are clear that within the church and family, men and women are to function in specifically designed roles. Jesus (Matthew 19:3-8) and Paul (1 Timothy 2:11-15) both reference the creation account as the foundation for their teaching on gender roles. To understand the NT teaching of gender roles we must first visit the creation account since gender roles are a part of God's original design. The teaching on gender roles applied to the church and home has a theological, not a cultural foundation.

Gender Roles – Theological Foundation

1. Adam was created first then Eve.

¹²But I do not allow a woman to teach or exercise authority over a man, but to remain quiet. ¹³For it was Adam who was first created, *and* then Eve. ¹⁴And *it was* not Adam *who* was deceived, but the woman being deceived, fell into transgression. (1 Timothy 2:12-14 and Genesis 2:7)

2. God created Adam directly from the dust, He formed the woman out of the man.

³But I want you to understand that Christ is the head of every man, and the man is the head of a woman, and God is the head of Christ. ... ⁷For a man ought not to have his head covered, since he is the image and glory of God; but the woman is the glory of man. ⁸For man does not originate from woman, but woman from man; (1 Corinthians 11:3; 7-8 and Genesis 2:21-23)

3. God created the woman for the man.

⁹for indeed man was not created for the woman's sake, but woman for the man's sake. (1 Corinthians 11:9 and Genesis 2:18)

4. God gave commands to Adam not Eve.

¹⁶The LORD God commanded the man, saying, "From any tree of the garden you may eat freely; ¹⁷but from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat from it you will surely die." (Genesis 2:16-17)

5. God named Adam and Adam exercised his God-given leadership in naming Eve.

²³The man said, "This is now bone of my bones, And flesh of my flesh; She shall be called Woman, Because she was taken out of Man." ... ²⁰Now the man called his wife's name Eve, because she was the mother of all the living. (Genesis 2:23; 3:20)

6. The gender roles were reversed when Adam followed Eve into sin.

⁶When the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was a delight to the eyes, and that the tree was desirable to make one wise, she took from its fruit and ate; and she gave also to her husband with her, and he ate. (Genesis 3:6)

7. After the fall God called out to Adam as responsible, not Eve (even though Eve ate first).

¹²Therefore, just as through one man sin entered into the world, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men, because all sinned—(Romans 5:12 c.f. Genesis 3:8-9)

8. The curse highlighted the new struggle in marriage with the original order that men and women would have – male oppression and female rebellion (Genesis 3:16; 4:7).

¹⁶To the woman He said, "I will greatly multiply Your pain in childbirth, In pain you will bring forth children; Yet your desire will be for your husband, And he will rule over you." (Genesis 3:16)

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? And why has your countenance fallen? ⁷"If you do well, will not {your countenance} be lifted up? And if you do not do well, sin is crouching at the door; and its desire is for you, but you must master it." (Genesis 4:6-7)

Paul summarizes the teaching on equality and distinctives in the church with “you are all one in Christ”. Oneness is the result of salvation by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Law does not produce oneness.

❖ **How do you actively practice your oneness in Christ within the local body?**

Conclusion

The Galatians were in danger of abandoning justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. Paul has explored the things the law cannot do, shown why the law was given, and is now showing the power of promise to do things that the law cannot do. He is giving more authenticating evidences of the superiority of promise (grace) over law. Spirit baptism leads to unity in the body. Justification by faith eliminates distinctions. There are no real cultural, ethnic, racial, past religious, financial, or social distinctions within the body of Christ. Neither should there be in practice.

Additional Study

1. Read Galatians once this week a chapter at a time (one chapter a day for six days).
2. Today’s Questions
 - How do you view people who look different than you?
 - How does your understanding of the purpose of the law (as a child-leader) impact your interaction in the body of Christ?
 - How does your understanding of Spirit baptism placing you into union with all others who have surrendered their life to Christ impact your view of body life?
 - Are there ways in your life that you make distinctions either in action or thought? What should you do about that?
 - Examine the spheres of your life: private, family, work, church, secular activities, etc. What behavior do you see that is hypocritical regarding how you make distinctions among people different than you? In what ways must you change to glorify God?