

The Gospel in Galatians Lesson 7 3Q 2017

The Road of Faith

SABBATH

This week's lesson is based on Galatians 3:21-25, let's read these texts first from the NIV:

Is the law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law.²² But the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

²³ Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed.²⁴ So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

²⁵ Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

What do you understand this to mean?

In this passage to what law is Paul referring? As we discovered last week, both the ceremonial and moral law of the 10 Commandments, but especially the 10 Commandments.

And what is the purpose of the law in this passage? A remedy? No! Something else—what?

What does it mean prisoner of sin? How is the world a prisoner to sin?

What does it mean held prisoner by the law? Does it mean we are criminals and the law sentences us to death and we are criminals on death row awaiting the ruling authority to execute us, except for those who claim the legal death payment of Jesus in their place?

What then is the cause of death? Does death come from sin itself, or is death an imposed punishment inflicted by God?

Such ideas are what the false legal view leads to, the lie that God's law functions like sinful human governments, imposed rules requiring imposed punishments. But, when we return to worship God as Creator and realize His laws are design laws, then we realize that sin is breaking His design for life and is a terminal condition which results in death unless remedied by our Savior.

What does justified by faith mean? It depends of the view of God's law one holds BEFORE they read the passage. If one believes God's law works like sinful human law then they read this passage and think it is God declaring in the courts of heaven the legal accounting of a person to be righteous even though they are not when that person claims in faith the legal payment of Jesus.

All such ideas are not reality, at best they are metaphor, at worst they are lies.

In reality, justification is simply setting humanity right with God again, fixing what is wrong, putting back to God's original design what is not longer in harmony with His law and design.

Here is Galatians 3:21-25 from the Remedy:

²¹ Is the written law, then, somehow in opposition to the promises of God? Of course not! The written law was simply a tool to diagnose our sickness and lead us to God for healing. If the written law could somehow cure the infection of selfishness and promote life, then healing would certainly have followed the giving of the law.²² But Scripture is clear: All humanity is infected with selfishness and is imprisoned by this terminal condition. It is by trust that we experience the only cure, the One promised—Jesus Christ—who was given to humankind as the Remedy to this terminal condition.

²³ Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ.²⁵ Now that trust in God has been restored—and we are set right in heart, mind, and character, and again practice God's methods—we no longer need the law to diagnose our condition or lead us back to God. *The Remedy*

Now, I received a message after lesson four asking this question:

After reading the notes for lesson 4 it seems that you are thinking like Catholics. Protestants understand “the grace of justification” as purely a legal declaration; for Rome justification is a process of inner renewal, something that happens in us.

This is a very understandable concern and a reasonable issue to raise, especially since essentially all of Christianity has indoctrinated into the idea that these two views are the only two views and the choice is a binary either or choice. So, I want to thank the person who sent in this question.

It also gives each of us an opportunity to do some reasoning and perhaps break out of a trap in which both positions are less than accurate.

First, how do you handle questions such as this? What is your response?

Before we get to the actual facts of the concern, notice one of the methods of persuasion being employed—to contrast the understood Protestant position with that of the understood Catholic position—why do that? What is the purpose?

Is it to suggest that if the Catholics have a certain view it must be wrong, therefore we should hold the other view?

This is one of the arguments made by those who argue against the Trinity, that because the idea is held by Catholics it cannot be correct. But this is a weak argument.

The demon possessed often said about Jesus "We know who you are thou Son of the Most High God." Would we suggest that because the demons said this about Jesus that we should argue the opposite that Jesus is not the Son of the Most High God? No we would not, so determining whether a view is right or wrong based on who said it, is not the best method for decision making.

Who said it can cause us to be suspicious, to scrutinize, but how about some actual evidence of which view is most accurate?

Next, it is important to check the assumed positions of the questioner are correct. What is the difference between the Protestant and Catholic views of Justification?

The very simplistic difference between the historic Lutheran and Calvinistic view and the Catholic views is this:

- Protestant—justification is an act of faith accepting the legal accounting, declaring, crediting, imputing to the sinner's account the sinless righteousness of Jesus, without any works on the sinner's part while the sinner remains just as sinful as before. It is an event in time that cannot be undone except by the loss of faith.
- Catholic—justification is the change in the inner man accomplished by the grace of God **plus** the works of the believer. Thus it is a process happening over time. In this view, the sinner is born with original sin and the sinner can be moved from a state of condemnation to a child of God only by baptism (infant), and later by faith plus the sacraments. The sacraments of baptism, penance, mass, etc. are controlled by the Church and thus are gateways to justification.

Historically, the Roman Church had come to a point in history where they held people hostage to the authority of the church institution. Salvation was dependent not upon a trust relationship with Jesus Christ alone, but a combination of faith in Jesus and works controlled by the church to include penance, baptism, mass, and indulgences. Further, salvation could be obtained through purging of the wickedness after death in a place called purgatory. A living person could help a loved one out of purgatory by purchasing a pass from the church to accomplish this.

Martin Luther and the reformers saw the corruption of this system and protested against it. In so doing they moved people toward a better understanding. However, their understanding and teaching was still predicated on the imposed law construct, already deeply rooted in the Catholic system. Thus, while it was moving away from institutional authoritarianism, and arbitrary works, it did not actually come to teach what true justification actually is. Instead, it set up another theological construct based on the false law idea.

Truth is unfolding and those who cling to the penal substitutionary view of the early reformers cling to a view which freed the reformers from the domination of a institutional system, however, it did not free them from the domination of selfishness and fear nor the view of God as the inflictor of eternal torment as the punishment for sin. This penal legal view has a form of godliness with no power.

According the an online Catholic Encyclopedia:

What then is the part assigned to faith in justification? According to Luther (and Calvin also), the faith that justifies is... the infallible conviction (*fides fiducialis, fiducia*) that God for the sake of Christ will no longer impute to us our sins, but will consider and treat us, as if we were really just and holy, although in our inner selves we remain the same sinners as before.

In the Protestant system, however, remission of sin is no real forgiveness, no blotting out of guilt. Sin is merely cloaked and concealed by the imputed merits of Christ; God no longer imputes it, whilst in reality it continues under cover its miserable existence till the hour of death. Thus there exist in man side by side two hostile brothers as it were — the one just and the other unjust; the one a saint, the other a sinner; the one a child of God, the other a slave of Satan — and this without any prospect of a conciliation between the two.

Thus we find in one of Luther's letters, written to Melancthon in 1521, the following sentence: "Be a sinner and sin boldly, but believe and rejoice in Christ more strongly, who triumphed over sin, death, and the world; as long as we live here, we must sin."...

We now come to the different states in the process of justification. The Council of Trent assigns the first and most important place to faith, which is styled "the beginning, foundation and root of all justification" ... The **process of justification** is then brought to a close by the baptism of water, inasmuch as **by the grace of this sacrament the catechumen is freed from sin (original and personal) and its punishments**, and is made a child of God. **The same process of justification is repeated in those who by mortal sin have lost their baptismal innocence; with this modification, however, that the Sacrament of Penance replaces baptism.** a<http://www.newadvent.org/cathen/08573a.htm>

Now, do we teach either of these views? What is the problem with both of these views?

This is a classic trap of Satan, get people believing two wrong views and then to argue those two views against each other. This happens when Protestants and Catholics argue over the Eucharist—the Catholic view is that during the mass Christ presents His sacrifice to the Father to pay for our sins, the Protestant view is He presents His merits to remind the Father that He has already paid for the sins on the Cross. Both miss the point that they are serving a dictator God, with an imposed law, who is the source of inflicted punishment for sin and who must be paid in order not to kill.

This same problem is happening with their argument over justification. They are both built on a legal system of imposed rules with inflicted punishment. The Protestant position grew out of a burdensome

religion in which works weighed down the sinner with penance and some action constantly needing to be done to influence God not to punish. The Protestants took away the sacraments, the works of humans, but did not take away the false law which causes people to think justice is God punishing, thus justification is addressing the punishment problem. Further, the Protestants actually set up a system in which people are told they are set right with God without any internal change in their heart at all, thus they will expect to continue to sin right up until the moment of translation. This is the form of godliness with no power.

The Catholic view realizes a change needs to happen in the person, but teaches that change comes about by **the works of the person and the power of the sacraments of the church in conjunction with faith**. Thus the Catholic view merges justification and sanctification and then adds sacraments and works.

The traditional Protestant view realizes change is part of salvation but separates it from justification and instead calls it sanctification. Whereas, justification is completely a legal process that has no internal change occurring in the believer.

Our view is that the species human was set right (justified) with God in the person of Jesus Christ—by what Jesus accomplished in His humanity. Because of Jesus there is a perfect, sinless human being—a descendant of Adam—who did not need to be delivered from His personal sin, but who by the exercise of His own human brain developed a perfect, sinless human character, thus restoring the species human to God's original intent.

The species was healed, put right, set right, justified first in the person of Jesus by His sinless life, selfless death which destroyed death and brought life and immortality to life, and thus resulted in His resurrection—in a humanity perfected and sinless.

In so doing, He procured the remedy to save all other humans who would give their consent to God so He can heal them.

In our experience we must first partake of Christ, ingest His body which was broken for us—this is symbolic of the truth. Jesus is the Word made flesh, thus by partaking of the words of truth—the truth about God Jesus revealed, the lies of Satan are destroyed and we are won from enmity and distrust to trust. This is justification, our hearts are set right in trust with God again. Romans 4:4 God, who is always truthful acknowledges the truth of this change and recognizes, accounts, declares that we who trust are set right with Him.

Then, in trust, their heart is opened and the Holy Spirit takes what Christ achieved and reproduces it within us. This is symbolically taught by drinking the wine—which is symbolic of the blood, which itself is symbolic of the life of Jesus, which is His perfect sinless character. We actually get a new heart and right spirit, it is no longer I that live but Christ lives in me, we become partakers of the divine nature. And with our trust in God and desire to live in harmony with His designs of truth, love

and freedom, we make choices to apply to our lives the truths and principles He reveals to us. This is sanctification.

But all of this is a gift from God, we don't earn it, we don't create it, we don't procure it, we receive it by faith and participate by trust in God. There are not sacraments or works in creating the Remedy, there is human cooperation in accepting and applying it to our lives.

Many commit the error of trying to define minutely the fine points of distinction between justification and sanctification. Into the definitions of these two terms they often bring their own ideas and speculations. Why try to be more minute than is Inspiration on the vital question of righteousness by faith? Why try to work out every minute point, **as if the salvation of the soul depended upon all having exactly your understanding of this matter?** All cannot see in the same line of vision. You are in danger of making a world of an atom, and an atom of a world. {CTr 150.2}

So we believe Christ achieved the remedy to our sinful condition singly and alone without any help from any sinner, or any human institution. He is the head of the human family, species, and is the second Adam. Thus in the person of Jesus humanity is restored to its right place in God's universe. This is the justification or the setting right of the species human. But in doing this He also achieved the remedy that every sinful human being may freely partake and be transformed and eternally saved. But before internal healing happens the sinner must trust God and open the heart to Him. His heart must be set right, i.e. he must exercise trust or faith in God, which is justification.

This robe, woven in the loom of heaven, has in it not one thread of human devising. Christ in His humanity wrought out a perfect character, and this character He offers to impart to us. "All our righteousness are as filthy rags." Isa. 64:6. Everything that we of ourselves can do is defiled by sin. But the Son of God "was manifested to take away our sins; and in Him is no sin." Sin is defined to be "the transgression of the law." 1 John 3:5, 4. But Christ was obedient to every requirement of the law. ...**By His perfect obedience He has made it possible for every human being to obey God's commandments.** When we submit ourselves to Christ, **the heart is united with His heart, the will is merged in His will, the mind becomes one with His mind, the thoughts are brought into captivity to Him; we live His life. This is what it means to be clothed with the garment of His righteousness.** Then as the Lord looks upon us He sees, not the fig-leaf garment, not the nakedness and deformity of sin, but His own robe of righteousness, which is perfect obedience to the law of Jehovah. {COL 311.4}

We want parents to awake from their lethargic sleep. Awake and see that at this time you must put on the beautiful robe of Christ's righteousness....**The righteousness of God never covers a soul all polluted with sin.** John says, "Behold the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world" (John 1:29). Will you let Him take it away? {1SAT 237}

So some review quotes from two weeks ago:

What is justification by faith? It is the work of God in laying the glory of man in the dust, and doing for man that which it is not in his power to do for himself. When men see their own nothingness, they are prepared to be clothed with the righteousness of Christ... {FLB 111.2}

The thought that the righteousness of Christ is imputed to us, not because of any merit on our part, but as a free gift from God, is a precious thought. The enemy of God and man is not willing that this truth should be clearly presented; for he knows that if the people receive it fully, his power will be broken. {FLB 111.6}

The law requires righteousness,—a righteous life, a perfect character; and this man has not to give. He cannot meet the claims of God's holy law. But Christ, coming to the earth as man, **lived a holy life, and developed a perfect character. These He offers as a free gift to all who will receive them. His life stands for the life of men.** Thus they have remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God. More than this, **Christ imbues men with the attributes of God. He builds up the human character after the similitude of the divine character,** a goodly fabric of spiritual strength and beauty. **Thus the very righteousness of the law is fulfilled in the believer in Christ.** God can "be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus." Rom. 3:26. {DA 762.2} [Where is the righteousness of the law fulfilled? In record books? In courtrooms in heaven? IN THE BELIEVER!]

He would have us comprehend something of His love in giving His Son to die that He might counteract evil, **remove the defiling stains of sin from the workmanship of God,** [to what is this referring? Is it not the human being?] and **reinstate the lost, elevating and ennobling the soul to its original purity through Christ's imputed righteousness.** TMK 206 Is this declared in some legal way, is it some application to records or courts in heaven, or is it an actual change happening within the believer being? And what is this healing change accomplished through? The *imputed* righteousness of Christ!

"But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory even as by the Spirit of the Lord" (2 Cor. 3:18). Beholding Christ means studying His life as given in His Word. We are to dig for truth as for hidden treasure. We are to fix our eyes upon Christ. When we take Him as our personal Saviour, this gives us boldness to approach the throne of grace. **By beholding we become changed, morally assimilated to the One who is perfect in character.** [Where is the focus? Where is the change? Is this legal or actual in the believer?] **By receiving His imputed righteousness, through the transforming power of the Holy Spirit, we become like Him.** [Again, where is the change, where is the impact of the *imputed* righteousness of Christ? This is not legal, the entire legal doctrine of penal substitution taught in Christianity is based on a lie, it is based on the false view of God's law and this

SUNDAY

Read second paragraph, “These people believed...” What does this sentence mean, “The law cannot make anyone alive spiritually”?

Can the law make anyone alive physically?
Can the law make anyone alive in any way?
Then why emphasize “spiritually?”

What does it mean to be dead spiritually?

As a people, we are backslicing from God. The hearts of his professed children are being estranged from him. While they have a name to live, the true, **vital energies of the soul have become spiritually dead..** {RH, July 10, 1879 par. 6}

Those are spiritually dead who profess to worship God while the heart is not in the work.
{ST, June 24, 1886 par. 3}

What does it mean to be spiritually dead? To be profess to worship but God, to be involved in church work, but the heart is not in it.

And what is the heart—is it the pump inside the chest?

In my new book, *The God-Shaped Heart* I go into detail describing the difference between the brain, mind and heart. Spiritually speaking, the heart is your true secret self, where you character, desires, motives, inmost personal identity is.

The Brain is the machine, the hardware, the neurons and glia, which are constantly changing based on the operations of the mind.

The mind is the entire software database, including your language, other facts and knowledge and memories, but your heart is a subset of your mind composing your core self.

To be spiritually dead is to have the right facts about God and the right doctrines, but not to be regenerated to have the law of love restored as the motive in the heart, to still be operating upon the principles of fear and selfishness. The spiritually dead are still focused on survival and that is their personal survival and the institutions to which their ego, self-esteem, name and reputation are tied. They may die for their institution, or a certain doctrine, if they have spent enough time associating their personal self with that institution. But their motive is still selfish and thus they are spiritually dead.

To arouse those spiritually dead, to create new tastes, new motives, requires as great an outlay of power as to raise one from physical death. It is indeed giving life to the dead to

convert the sinner from the error of his ways; but our Deliverer is able to do this; for He came to destroy the works of the enemy. And will He not accomplish that which He has pledged himself to perform? {RH, March 12, 1901 par. 16}

MONDAY

What does it mean to be kept under the written law? The lesson suggests a couple of meanings:

1. an alternate way of salvation by keeping the rules—but the Bible makes it clear this is impossible
2. being under its condemnation—read second paragraph, “Under the law...” thoughts?

Do you like the second view? Is there another view?

Yes the written law is a gift to function like a diagnostic instrument and protective hedge and a guidepost. It diagnosis what is wrong to bring us to realize we are dying and need external help, it protects us from further self-injury, and leads us back to Christ who can heal us.

We are not under condemnation because of the written law—we are under condemnation because of the terminal condition with which we were born.

The written law merely diagnosis what is already true in us. This is why Paul writes in Romans 5:12-14

Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way **death came to all men**, because all sinned—¹³ **for before the law was given, sin was in the world.** But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. ¹⁴ **Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command,** as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.

From *The Remedy*:

Therefore, the infection of distrust of God—which deformed humanity's heart and mind with selfishness and fear, and which results only in death—infected the human race when Adam accepted Satan's lies about God and broke trust with him. This infection of fear and selfishness is inherited by all human beings, so all are born infected.¹³ This is revealed by the fact that before the written law was given, the infection of distrust, fear and selfishness was already present in the world. But this infection of distrust, fear and selfishness is not diagnosable without the law.¹⁴ Nevertheless, even without being diagnosed as infected with this terminal condition, humans still died, all the way from the time of Adam to Moses—even those who did not break a specific command, like Adam did—revealing that the problem is the infected state of our minds and not a legal issue with God. Adam, the first man, being the conduit through

which the infection entered humanity, also represents the one man who is the conduit of the antidote that cures all those who accept it.

TUESDAY

Did you notice how awkward and difficult it is for those who hold the false human law concept to communicate the goodness of the law. They really work so hard to help people see that God's law is for us, because most react to it as if it is not.

It become so simple when we realize God's law is design law, and that the written law was added as a tool we needed, to diagnose, protect and lead to Christ.

From *The Remedy*:

Before Christ came, we were quarantined by the written law—restrained from continual self-destruction—until Christ procured the only true cure.²⁴ The written law was provided as a safeguard to protect us and lead us to Christ—the Great Physician—so that we might be restored to unity with God by trust in, and partaking of, Christ... Gal 3:23,24

WEDNESDAY

Read third paragraph, “Paul’s description of the law...” What does Romans 2:4 says brings us to repentance? It is the kindness of God.

Does the law have a negative aspect?

When did Adam run and hide from God before or after the law was given at Sinai?

Why did he run and hide? Where did the condemnation originate? Was it from the written law or did the condemnation originate in Adam’s changed condition?

So why was the law added later? Because sin numbs, deadens, warps, hardens and people no longer felt conviction, no longer felt shame, guilt, condemnation, and thus the written law was needed to diagnose those so sin sick they didn’t think they were sin sick—but the condemnation is in the condition and existed before the written law was given.

Is what the function of written law negative? If you have a tumor and go into the MRI and it reveals the tumor is that a negative aspect of the MRI? Or is it a redemptive and helpful aspect?

The condemnation comes from the condition itself, the law only diagnoses or exposes or reveals the condition. Thus Jesus said:

“Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit.³⁴ You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks.³⁵ The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him.³⁶ But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.³⁷ For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Mt 12:33-37

THURSDAY

Read fourth paragraph, “Instead, because the law is a transcript of God’s character....” What does it mean a transcript of God’s character? What are the lessons of this metaphor? What are the limitations of a transcript?

Consider DNA a transcript of a person. Does the DNA transcript reveal things about the person?

Does the DNA transcript let us know beauty of the smile? The reaction of forgiveness when wronged, the kindness in adversity, the depth of love in action?

The law of God is a living law and cannot be truly understood on stone—in fact it was not written on stone until it was no longer written in the hearts and minds of human beings. God’s plan is to restore His design law, His living law, back into you and me where it can be seen in its full active glory!

Love does no harm to its neighbor. Therefore love is the fulfillment of the law. Rom 13:10

FRIDAY

Read third paragraph, “All who did service...” Discuss question 1.

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

August 18,19, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Celebration SDA church in Celebration, Florida.

Sep 5, 2017: Dr. Jennings' new book *The God-Shaped Heart* will be released by Baker Books. Here is a brief description:

September 15,16 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Church in the Valley, Aldergrove, British Columbia, Canada.

September 26-Oct 1, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the AACC World Conference, Nashville TN, and our ministry will have a booth in the exhibit hall.

October 12-16, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at Garden Grove SDA church in Garden Grove, CA. This will be a multi-speaker event focusing on the atonement. For more information contact:

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October 27, 28, 2017: Dr. Jennings will speaking at the Arlington SDA church in Arlington, TX. For more information contact: <http://www.arlingtonadventist.com/>

November 17,18, 2017: Dr. Jennings will be speaking at the Vallejo Dr. SDA church in California.