

## **“A Father of Faith” (Galatians 3:1-14)(6.20.21)**

Galatians 3:1–14 (NIV84)

**3** You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. <sup>2</sup> I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or **by believing** what you heard? <sup>3</sup> Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? <sup>4</sup> Have you suffered so much for nothing—if it really was for nothing? <sup>5</sup> Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because **you believe** what you heard?

<sup>6</sup> Consider Abraham: “**He believed God**, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” <sup>7</sup> Understand, then, that those **who believe** are children of Abraham. <sup>8</sup> The Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles **by faith**, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: “All nations will be blessed through you.” <sup>9</sup> So those who **have faith** are blessed along with Abraham, **the man of faith**.

<sup>10</sup> All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” <sup>11</sup> Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will **live by faith**.” <sup>12</sup> The law is not based on **faith**; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” <sup>14</sup> He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that **by faith** we might receive the promise of the Spirit.

**The word of God for the people of God.**

LET US PRAY.

Title: **“A Father of Faith”**

INTRODUCTION:

I am going to open today’s message with the Prince of Preacher’s conclusion of his sermon titled Hearing of Faith – Charles Spurgeon preached:

“Sometimes also when we have preached free forgiveness, full redemption, irreversible acceptance, infinite love, boundless grace, unchallengeable justification; when we have declared that the Lord’s mercy endureth for ever, and that men have but to look to Jesus and there and then find eternal life,— then **faith** has dropped on men’s minds as dew upon the grass.

Our hearers have felt that such tidings must be true, for nobody could have invented them. **The gospel has the stamp of Deity upon it**, and this commends it to man’s heart. Free grace and dying love are **worthy of faith**, and they win faith. I pray that all of you who are seekers may give up all trying to feel, and trying to work, and trying to be, and may just come and put **your trust in Jesus**. Then shall you be saved, and then you may work, and feel, and do as much as you like. Then shall you abound in good works, and the more the merrier. Then you shall fight with sin and overcome it; then shall you set up a high standard and reach it; then shall you strive after holiness and manifest it.

But do not begin where you ought to leave off. Do not put, as the proverb hath it, the cart before the horse; do not place the top of the house where the foundation ought to be; but as you never did obtain anything by the works of the law, come and try **“the hearing of faith,”** and you shall receive all that you need in Christ Jesus. God grant it, for Jesus’ sake. Amen.

BODY:

In today’s scripture, Paul tethers faith and God the Holy Spirit together as he explains that those **who believe** are children of Abraham. Of course, he is saying that Christians are the spiritual children of Abraham. He was a model father when it comes to living by faith and we, as his children, are called to live by faith too.

Let us examine additional scriptural evidence for Abraham’s faithfulness and his being our father in the Faith.

Romans 4:1–8 (NIV84) *Abraham Justified by Faith*

**4** What then shall we say that Abraham, our **forefather**, discovered in this matter? <sup>2</sup> If, in fact, Abraham was justified by works, he had something to boast about—but not before God. <sup>3</sup> What does the Scripture say? “Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

<sup>4</sup> Now when a man works, his wages are not credited to him as a gift, but as an obligation. <sup>5</sup> However, to the man who does not work **but trusts God** who justifies the wicked, **his faith** is credited as righteousness. <sup>6</sup> David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works:

<sup>7</sup> “Blessed are they  
whose transgressions are forgiven,  
whose sins are covered.

<sup>8</sup> Blessed is the man  
whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”

Hebrews 11:6–10 (NIV84)

<sup>6</sup> And **without faith** it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.

<sup>7</sup> By **faith** Noah, when warned about things not yet seen, in holy fear built an ark to save his family. By his **faith** he condemned the world and became heir of the righteousness that comes by **faith**.

<sup>8</sup> By **faith** Abraham, when called to go to a place he would later receive as his inheritance, obeyed and went, even though he did not know where he was going. <sup>9</sup> By **faith** he made his home in the promised land like a stranger in a foreign country; he lived in tents, as did Isaac and Jacob, who were heirs with him of **the same promise**. <sup>10</sup> For he was looking forward to the city with foundations, whose architect and builder is God.

Romans 4:18 (NIV84)

<sup>18</sup> Against all hope, Abraham in hope **believed** and so **became the father of many nations**, just as it had been said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”

Romans 9:8 (NIV84) In other words, it is not the natural children who are God’s children, but it is the children of the promise who are regarded as Abraham’s offspring.

Galatians 4:23 (NIV84) [Abraham’s] son by the slave woman was born in the ordinary way; but his son by the free woman was **born as the result of a promise**.

And a few verses later, Paul is speaking directly to Christians: Galatians 4:28 (NIV84) Now you, brothers, like Isaac, **are children of promise**.

In John 15:5 (NIV84), Jesus tells us what can be accomplished **without** faith: “I am the vine; you are the branches. If a man remains in me and I in him, he will bear much fruit; **apart from me you can do nothing**.

From the collection of The World’s Greatest Sermons, hear a relevant lament from Thomas Hooker, who not only was a minister of the gospel but is called the Father of Connecticut from 400 years ago: “If thou art fruitless, say what thou wilt, thou hast no **faith** at all. Alas, these idle drones, these idle Christians, the Church is too full of them; Men are continually hearing, and yet remain fruitless and unprofitable; whereas if there were more **faith** in the world, we should have more work done in the world; **faith** would set feet, and hands, and eyes, and all on work.

Men go under the name of professors, but alas! they are but pictures; they stir not a whit; mark, where you found them in the beginning of the year, there you shall find them in the end of the year, as profane, as worldly, as loose in their conversations, as formal in duty as ever. And is this **faith**? Oh! **faith** would work other matters, and provoke a soul to other passages than these.”

In contrast I offer up two testimonies: The angel Gabriel tells Mary in Luke 1:37 (NIV84) “For nothing is impossible with God.” She would be the mother of the Messiah.

Jesus tells his disciples in Matthew 19:26 (NIV84) “With man this is impossible, but with God all things are possible.”

If we believe the Angel Gabriel and our Lord Jesus, how can we not have faith? Now, I want to share from Bill Bright's book, *The Holy Spirit – The Key to Supernatural Living*, CHAPTER 15: "The Supernatural Power of Faith:"

"Occasionally, I hear people say that "Bill Bright is a man of great faith." The statement is made because our ministry frequently is involved with many thousands of churches of all denominations and other Christian organizations in gargantuan undertakings – massive worldwide programs of evangelism and discipleship in which we have by faith trusted God for the salvation of millions of souls.

At first I trusted Him for one soul, then six, then ten souls, then hundreds, thousands, millions and most recently, for a billion souls for Christ in the next ten years.

These goals are not built on careless presumptions or figures plucked out of the air like some kind of mystical, emotional, spiritual experience, but they are based upon my confidence in the sovereignty, holiness, love, wisdom, power and grace of the omnipotent God whom I serve – and upon His gracious blessing upon past efforts that have been undertaken for His glory and praise. No credit should be given to me or to the ministry of which I am part, but only to the One in whom I place my faith.

**Faith must have an object, and the object of my faith is God and His inspired Word.** The right view of God generates faith. Faith is like a muscle: it grows with exercise. The more we see God accomplish in and through our lives, the more we can be assured that He will accomplish as we trust and obey Him more.

There is nothing mysterious about faith. It is simply a matter of getting to know the God whom we worship, His holy inspired Word, claiming His promises, expecting the results of those promises, claimed by a life that lives in faith and obedience.

At one time in my life, I had little faith, as stated earlier. I could believe God only for small things, but with the passing of time, my knowledge of God has increased. My confidence in God and His Word has grown so that now I believe Him for great and mighty things.

Indeed, I now believe Him for the saturation of the entire world with the gospel, the necessary billions of dollars to make it possible, and the training of tens of millions of Christians to perform the task. But, it is not because of me or our devoted, consecrated staff now serving in more than 150 countries. It is because of my growing knowledge of and therefore trust in – God, and the fact that He chose to use us.

You see, God has not changed; He is the same yesterday, today and forever. The God to whom I prayed for little things is the same God to whom I now pray for great and mighty things. He has deigned to use human vessels.

Get to know God, master His word, trust Him for great and mighty things and expect those things to happen. Faith unlocks the door to the supernatural resources of God. The eleventh chapter of Hebrews lists faith's hall of fame:

"These people all trusted God and as a result won battles, overthrew kingdoms, ruled their people well, and they received what God had promised them; they were kept from harm in a den of lions, and in a fiery furnace.

Some, through their faith, escaped death by the sword. Some were made strong again after they had been weak or sick. Others were given great power in battle. They made whole armies turn and run away." (Hebrews 11:33-34 TLB) Among these great warriors of faith were Abel, Enoch, Noah, Sarah, Jacob, Moses and Abraham.

Romans 4:20-23 records a model of faith. "But Abraham never doubted. He believed God, for his faith and trust were strong, and he praised God for this blessing before it even happened. He was completely sure that God was well able to do anything He promised. And because of Abraham's faith, God forgave his sins and called him just and good.

“Now this wonderful promise – that he was accepted and approved through his faith – wasn’t just for Abraham’s benefit. It was for us, too, assuring us that God will accept us in the same way He accepted Abraham – when we believe the promises of God who brought back Jesus our Lord from the dead. He died for our sins and rose again to make us right with God, filling us with God’s goodness” (TLC).

### **Live By Faith**

How sad to see wonderful, sincere Christians who have been deceived by a wrong emphasis on emotions. I know of nothing that has caused so much defeat among Christians. We don’t live by feelings – “we live by faith,” the apostle Paul reminds us (Galatians 3:11, NAS).

Valid emotional feelings are simply the by-product of faith and obedience. There is nothing wrong with feelings. Thank God we have them! Do not be ashamed of or minimize feelings, but do not seek them, either. Never emphasize them out of balance. To seek an emotional experience is contrary to God’s command for us to live by faith. Not only that, it is an insult to God. Let emotions find their proper place in your relationship with Christ as you live in faith and obedience.

The apostle John records the words of Jesus who explained that the most valid way to have an emotional experience is to be obedient to Him. He said, “He who has My commandments, and keeps them, he it is who loves Me, and he who loves Me shall be loved by My Father, and I will love him, and will disclose (or Make real) Myself to Him” (John 14:21, NAS).

One of the greatest acts of obedience is to live a holy life and share Christ with others in the power of the Holy Spirit. Matthew 4:19 records the Lord’s command and promise: “Follow Me and I will make you fishers of men.” Again, in John 15:8, we read of Christ’s great concern for our faithfulness to perpetuate the evangelism which He began.

Since He came to seek and to save the lost and has commissioned us to witness for Him, nothing could please the Savior more. If you want a valid, vital, exciting awareness of Christ in your experience, begin to share Christ with others as a way of life as you walk in the Spirit.

### **Emotional Counterfeits**

Avoid man-made emotionalism that is generated by resorting to tricks and manipulations of individuals. Many such emotional experiences are a counterfeit of the genuine experience which can be yours through obedience to Christ, as Lord and Savior.

We live according to God’s promise, trusting in the integrity of God Himself. As we have already discovered, faith must have an object. And the object of our faith as Christians is God and His Word. God has proven Himself to be worthy of our trust.

Thousands of promises for us are contained in God’s Word, and no Christian has ever found any one of them to be untrue. When God says something, you can stake your life on the fact that whatever He says is true. You can know that He will not fail you.

### **Give Thanks By Faith**

God promises us: “All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose” (Romans, 8:28, NAS). Do you believe this promise of God? If so, you logically acknowledge the reasonableness of this command of God, too: “In everything give thanks; for this is God’s will for you in Christ Jesus” (1 Thessalonians 5:18, NAS).

Have you learned to say, “Thank You, Lord,” when a loved one dies? “Thank you for all the years together.” Do you thank God when your body is wracked with pain? “Thank you for sparing my life.” When you receive a “Dear John” letter ending a love relationship? “Thank you that you know the future.” When you have financial reverses? When you fail an exam? When you are unemployed? Do you thank God when you are discriminated against personally, religiously, racially or because of your sex and age?

You may say that only a fool would give thanks to God under such circumstances. No, not if all things really do work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.

If God has commanded us to give thanks, there is a reason for it. Let me assure you, as one who has had more than 25 years of experience in this area, this is one of the most exciting lessons I have ever learned – the lesson of saying “Thank You” when many things go wrong, as well as in response to God’s many gracious gifts and blessings.

### **A Better Place**

Before I made this discovery, I used to lose my patience when things did not go my way. I would force open those “close doors,” if necessary. And, if they did not open before me, I tried to break them down. I was often tense inside and impatient with others who did not agree with me. Then I discovered what a fool I was.

Oh, how tragically we can injure our brothers and sisters in Christ with our impatience, our criticism, our thoughtlessness. Christians often act this way and the entire body of Christ suffers as a result.

But God has given us a better way. We can relax. We can say “Thank You” when the whole world is crumbling down around us, because our God is sovereign and all-powerful. He holds the world in His hands, and we can trust Him. He loves us. And He promises to fight for us.

He has commanded us to cast all of our cares upon Him, for He cares for us (1 Peter 5:7). He personally visited planet earth and took upon Himself our sins. How He is waiting to bless and use us. But He cannot bless and use us if we are carnal, worried and unbelieving. He will not bless and use us if we complain, criticize and find fault with Him and others whom He commands us to love.”

Then Bill Bright shared a couple of examples of people in the midst of tribulation that came to him for advice. They listened to him and were blessed. Then he gave a personal example.

### **The Ministry at Stake**

“Some years ago, when there was a desperate need for more than a half million dollars toward the purchase of Arrowhead Springs, the Campus Crusade for Christ international headquarters, the future of the great worldwide ministry was at stake. Because of a technicality, our financial world had crumbled and there appeared to be no hope. The whole ministry was in danger of being destroyed, and my own reputation would be shattered.

When word came to me from a friend that the money which we had been promised was no longer available, I fell to my knees and prayed, “Lord, what am I to do?” Opening my Bible to look for help and assurance, I was reminded that all things work together for good to those who love God; that the just shall live by faith. [Also], I read the command from God to give thanks in everything.

### **God Is Faithful**

So, in obedience to His command, I thanked God for what had happened. Through my tears, I thanked Him that in His wisdom and love He knew better than I what should be done, and that out of this chaos and uncertainty would come a miraculous solution to our problem. There on my knees, while I was still giving thanks for this great disappointment, God began to give me the genuine assurance that this miracle was really going to happen. Within ten days, God did provide an almost unbelievable solution to our problem – a miracle. He demonstrated once again that, when we trust Him, He is faithful and worthy of our trust.”

Now, let me jump to the close of the chapter:

### **Moment By Moment**

“In summary, may I remind you that if you desire to live supernaturally, to walk moment by moment, day by day, in the fullness and power of God’s Holy Spirit, you must:

First, be sure that you are filled with the Spirit, by faith – on the basis of God’s command to be filled and by claiming His promise that, if we ask according to His will, He will hear and answer.

Second, be prepared for spiritual conflict. The enemy is a real foe to be reckoned with. The world, the flesh and the devil will assail.

Third, know that the Holy Spirit guarantees your rights as a child of God. Our strength must come from the Lord. We must abide in Him.

And finally, live by faith, drawing daily upon His strength, His wisdom, His power and His love, giving thanks in all things.

Do you want to live supernaturally but lack the faith to trust the Holy Spirit to empower you and control you? Faith, while a gift of God (Ephesians 2:8), is also mentioned in the Bible as part of the fruit of the Spirit (faithfulness) (Galatians 5:22). This, it is a Christian trait that can be developed in a day-to-day, moment-by-moment walk with the Holy Spirit."

We will continue our exploration in the weeks to come. Our spiritual father, Abraham lived a supernatural life by faith; and, by faith, we can too. Paul tells us, (Romans 8:16 (NIV84)) "The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children."

Amen and amen. Let us pray.