

5.26.2024

Galatians

Chapter 3 - No Understanding with Man Unable to Grasp Spiritual Truths (vs.15-18)

Galatians 3:15-18: Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant, yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it. Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ. What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to nullify the promise. For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.

I come to passage like this, and one of the first questions I have to God is, "Why is this significant?" It's hard to realize that some of the things that are in Scripture that really are extremely significant and yet it's hard to see it initially. One of the reasons is because we're thinking in the flesh. We're not being led by the Spirit. Once again, these are spiritual words. The Spirit of God then begins to reveal them to us. Seems like a closed book to us, many times, at least certain portions do, and yet we know that all Scripture is God breathed; is moved by the Spirit of God. What Paul's concern is that the Galatians were starting to work into the realm of the Law; more specifically, in the flesh, things that they could do, things that they could understand. They started walking away from the Spirit of God moving and directing them. His point at the very beginning of this chapter is, "You began in the Spirit. What happened?" He then begins to go on and he says, "You need to be led by the Spirit." The Spirit of God is that which directs you. We live in a realm as believers in which the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us and He's the one that tells us things. We listen to Him. He opens up our eyes and reveals truth to us. It's hard for us to think that way because we're so immersed in the things of the world. We're so immersed and so easily the world comes into us, even though we might be believers, and it causes us to start thinking again like the world does. Why is it that the things of the world are so appealing to us? Why is it that we're so drawn to the tangible? Why are we so drawn to the Law? Well, that is an interesting question, but what the Law does begin to reveal to us, especially as you look in the book of Galatians, is that it gives us a platform to compete with one another. It gives us a platform to look superior, to be recognized, to get some sort of

affirmation or accolades from people because it's a plane in which you can actually show yourself superior to somebody else; if, by virtue of doing something more or doing something better, you can distinguish yourself in a greater way. The Law gives you that platform. We come before God, and we go, "It's all You. It's all You. You did everything for us." It sort of takes away that sense of superiority. One of the great problems that we see in the Book of Galatians is not only was there that sense of maybe competition, but forms of esoteric groups; in which people think, "Well, we're special and we're greater than you." If you've ever been in a religious place in which you came in contact with a particular religious people that were so dressed in garb that it almost made you feel small and diminished, maybe you at that moment began to feel, "Yeah, I get it. I get with this whole religious thing does." Because that's what it does. It suppresses and oppresses those around it.

One of Paul's concerns when he writes the Corinthians is, he goes, "Look, you say that when I come before you and you see me in person, I don't seem to be too impressive, and my speech seems to be contemptible to you. Would you like it better if I hit you in the face, and I began to command you to do things?" The point is that if somebody is in a superior position and they bark out orders and they have all these standards and these hoops you have to jump through, people elevate those kind of people more than a person that would come into their lives and be gracious and kind to them and consider them. We have a tendency to always go towards the whole Law thing, because once again it elevates man, and we love those kind of things. Paul's having to deal with that specifically with the Galatians.

When we come to this passage in verses 15 through 18 in particular, what we're going to be looking at is Paul having to deal with them in a human speech category. In other words, when somebody's not walking according to the Spirit of God, you have to talk to them on a lower level. It goes something like this, if you've ever dealt with your kids when they were little, and you tell your kids, "Now, be kind to your brother." And they are maybe 2-3 years old and then you watch one of them take the wooden block and hit their brother on the head with it, and you go, "Now, be kind to your brother." You take the block and hit him on the head, and you go, "Ok. Give me the block." So, you get the block, and you go, "Bam! How does that feel?" "It hurts." "Ok, so now that you understand that it hurts, hopefully we can graduate a little bit more into the Spirit. Don't hurt your brother. Be kind to your brother." The point of the matter is that we're in the physical and we don't think in the spiritual until we begin to feel the pain. Here again, it's very hard for us to think beyond that.

Paul deals with this in verse 15 and the way that he starts off the verse,

(Galatians 3:15) "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations..."

See that one little phrase? It's really kind of the introduction. It would be the introduction of basically saying, "You're unable to grasp spiritual truths."

Paul says something similar to this if you look with me in 1 Corinthians 3:1, just to kind of give you an analogous passage, as Paul's talking to the Corinthians, he says,

(1 Corinthians 3:1) "And I, brethren, could not speak to you as to spiritual men, but as to men of flesh, as to infants in Christ."

"I wish I could talk to you in a way of some kind of depth." Ultimately, he goes into 1 Corinthians 13, where he describes what being an adult or being a man looks like, and it literally is the description of love. So, the point of the matter is that we're not thinking in those terms. We're thinking in the realm of pragmatism, tangibility, utilitarianism. We're thinking about things that affect us and things that we want; not necessarily, "How does this person feel?" The disciples, they look at the multitudes and they go, "It's time for them to go home. Who's going to feed them?" And Jesus goes, "We are." "Well, they have stores and places that they could go to." They look at the multitudes and they say, "You know, we've got to get rid of these people." Jesus looks at the multitudes and begins to weep, and He sees sheep without a shepherd. Now, who thinks that way? See, that's the thinking of the Spirit.

One of the wonderful passages in the Gospel of Luke, when the disciples are watching and everybody's watching these rich people bring in, I mean, a lot of wealth into the church. They're seeing all these crowns and gold and people bringing in. You imagine this great temple that's probably two football fields in size and people are coming in with all these wonderful things. You can't help but look at them, but Jesus is looking at this widow who puts in a mite. Who looks at things like that? The disciples come before the temple, and they go, "Wow, look at these stones. There's nothing more magnificent than these massive stones that are built in the gold arch on the door and it's just something to behold; one of the great wonders of the world." Jesus says, "Not one stone is going to be put upon another. This is going to go down." Of course, at 70 AD it was ultimately destroyed. Man tends to focus on the tangible, on the productivity of what man accomplishes rather than the heart of God; the Spirit of God. What does the Spirit of God look like? How do you bring somebody from the realm of the physical and the tangible and the concrete into the realm of the spiritual? These are clearly believers.

We understand that as he starts off in Chapter 3, "You foolish Galatians. You started off this way, you received the Spirit of God, but somehow, you've allowed the world to come in and take you away." So, how do you get back into that? Because when you first receive Christ, I mean, how wonderful it is. The Spirit of God just begins to excite you and lead you and direct you and you want to do everything that's pleasing to God. Before long, that spirit kind of wanes and we find ourselves wanting again to go into the mechanics of Christianity; going to church

because we have to or because it's expected of us, because somebody's watching. What happened?

Well, as he starts off in this particular chapter in verse 15, he says, "I guess I'm going to have to speak to you on human terms. I guess, I'm going to have to speak to you according to man, according to the standards of man." So, he gives this interesting example in verse 15. Now, if you just read this, it would be hard to fully comprehend exactly what was being said because of the wording itself in the English. To fully comprehend, if we delve a little bit into the Greek, we begin to understand that he's actually talking about what is called a will and a testament, and he's given an example of something that they would be well acquainted with. So, we pick up in verse 15,

"Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations: even though it is only a man's covenant..."

It's like he jumps right in to a particular example that he wants to give. Now once again, I just want to go back to my original analogy, you're dealing with people that are not thinking spiritually. So, a hit on the head with a block is probably going to help because they're going to have to come to the point of feeling what they need to feel and understand. So, he's going to bring them right into the realm of the flesh, where they're thinking. What are people mostly thinking about? Well, money, inheritance. That's what he's talking about in the passage.

So, we pick up, and he starts this way,

"Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations (human things, standards): even though it is only a man's covenant..."

Now, we're going to stop there because "covenant" is what we're going to be talking about. Man's covenant in this particular text, you could literally translate "will and testament." So, what we're talking about in this passage are the wills, people's inheritance that they would get. So, his point is, it's only a man's will and testament,

"... yet when it has been ratified, no one sets it aside or adds conditions to it."

Now once again, to fully understand this, you're going to have to go a little bit in the background of this, in the history of what's going on, but what were wills and testaments like at that particular time? Well, they were honored. They were honored even by the government to such a degree that once a will and testament was made, even the government could not change the will and testament at that particular time. So, he brings this interesting point in. There was a guy by the name of Plutarch which was a contemporary of Paul, so lived at the same time as Paul. He was a Greek philosopher, historian and actually wrote laws. And one of the laws that he wrote that as he was not only a Greek but also a Roman at this time, was a law dealing with wills and testaments. Basically, what you would have to do in order for you to have

a will and testament to be handed down is, you would have to get three standard sized blocks of wood, so to speak, in which you would write out the will and the testament. You would write on one side of the wood and then on another piece of wood you'd write it again. You would take the three pieces of wood. The one side you would have the will and testament on the outside, and you could read it on the outside. Then, the other will and testament that was written, you would put it on the inside and you would sandwich all these three together and then you would put it in wax. Then what you would do is, you would bind it, and each time you would bind it, you would put a seal on it. Those seals, however many, would be the seals of the witnesses of that binding document. So, what they would do is, one would bind it, and he would put his seal, and another would bind it. Usually, I say usually, there were seven witnesses, seven seals. One of the reasons why, when you come into Revelation, and Jesus is taking the lamb and taking the seven seals apart is because He is actually claiming the inheritance of the universe. So, you have this interesting picture of Him doing that. Only the one who owned it could break the seals because once the seal was broken, if you went in and you weren't in that inheritance, it was null and void. So, this is the way they protect that document, they would have the one on the inside. You would say, "Well, what happens if the outside has changed?" Well, change the outside, but once you break it, it'll show you somebody cheated and lied, so it just nullified it. So, these things were conveyed at this particular time and were well known at this time. According to Roman law, you could not change a will and testament. So, it really superseded even the government, so to speak. The wishes of the father, the wishes of whoever left the will and testament were superior to anything else that was being made. He establishes this point to then take us to a kind of will and testament that was given to Abraham all the way back in the days of Abraham. Of course, obvious that he would bring Abraham into the mix, he's somebody that they would listen to.

Number of years ago, if you were to walk up to a Protestant and maybe have a debate with him, if you quoted Martin Luther, he would probably perk up his ears and listen because that's who he was following. Lutherans, Protestants, where we get the word Protestant, "Protestants"; those who protested during that time and broke free from the Catholic Church. So, they would probably perk up theirs and listen. If you were to talk to a black audience, and you were to quote Martin Luther King, then they would perk up their ears. You would quote him, and they would go, "That's somebody we'll listen to." Abraham was somebody that they were going to listen to because that was their father. Everybody wanted to be the son of Abraham. He had been the one that had been set apart as the leader of their nation; more specifically, the follower of God. Scripture actually defines him as the friend of God. So, he brings up Abraham. So, what he's done at the very beginning is he brings up something that they were well acquainted to in the Law, and he's got their attention about wills and testaments.

In fact, the way that it's put within the passage, when a man sets up a will and testament, and it's been "ratified," see the word "ratified" there? It actually, has as its root word "*kurios*," where we get the word "lord." The point is that a magistrate had to be present; an Archon, or a ruler had to be present in order for this document to have its authority. So, he would declare it as authoritative. People would gather together. The seven witnesses were there. They would put their seals on it. The ruler of the country would come, and he would say, "This is ratified." And by his stating that it becomes a now legal document that can't be messed with. His point is, once it's ratified, it can't be messed with. Somebody in authority said it.

He then states in verse 16,

"Now the promises..."

I mean, he immediately takes us from the realm of something that maybe they were very much into and that is money and the inheritance thereof, and he puts us into the promises that were made to Abraham and the declaration by God, that this is something that will stand.

"Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, "And to seeds," as referring to many, but rather to one, "And to your seed," that is, Christ."

I am always amazed and probably shouldn't be, at the detail of Scripture. People say, "Well, why do you go in such detail on understanding Scripture?" Because God is very detailed in Scripture. The way that it's put, as Jesus says, "Don't think that I came to abolish the Law. I came to fulfill it, and every jot and every tittle will be fulfilled." That's everything that you can see, everything that you can't see will be fulfilled. I'm going to make sure to the minutest of detail.

The interesting thing about going by the Law is that man tends to only use the Law to position himself to the place that he needs to be. Therefore, he begins to compromise, or we have people like lawyers who like to twist the law to fit into what they want it to say, so that it somehow works for them. We have a tendency to do that, and that was true with the Pharisees as well.

Mark 7 is probably one of the greatest examples in which the Pharisees and the Sadducees come up to Jesus, and they go, "Why are You going against our traditions?" And Jesus goes, "Why do you go against the Law of God?" He says, "You know, the big problem is you've forsaken the greater things." One of the things he had stated in Matthew is, "You strain a gnat and swallow a camel." So, that pretty well describes what they were doing, but in this particular case Jesus begins to point out, He says, "You neglect your parents." And one of the great commandments of course, in the Ten Commandments, Exodus 20, is "honor your mother and father." But he says, "What you do is, you take all your belongings and all the things that you

love and want to keep and you, with great fanfare, pray a blessing over them and you dedicate them to God." It's actually called "corban." So, "We'll "corbanize" them and we'll just give all the things to God." So that when Mom and Dad need something, they come to you, "You know, son, we might need a little help here." You go, "Gee, Mom and Dad, I'd love to help you. I just gave it to God." Now, you can use it anytime you want to, but you just can't share it with Mom and Dad because you gave it to God, and they actually had that in their laws so that they wouldn't have to. Here again, that's part of that litigation, adjudication; those words that are used to somehow confuse because we're not concerned in actually doing the Law, we're concerned in using the Law. The same thing was true when Jesus was talking to them, and they were coming up to Jesus and they go, "Can we divorce for any reason at all? I mean, Moses gave us a certificate of divorce." And Jesus goes, "You really don't understand what God said when He created man and woman, that He didn't give any other options. There wasn't man and women. It was just the two of them. He says, "Have you not read that God created them, male and female? From the beginning, it was not so." Man tends to look over, I guess we would say, details, and he seems to think that it's really not an issue.

One of my favorite passages, Matthew 22, just to give you one more example, and then we'll go on. In Matthew 22, there are those that are coming to Him, Sadducees in particular, who, for whatever reason, because probably one of the reasons is that they only accepted the Pentateuch; which is the first five books of the Old Testament. So, they only accepted those five books, and in the Pentateuch, there is no mention of the word "resurrection." So, the Sadducees basically were politicians at that time, and more concerned with accumulating money and fame and fortune and position than anything else. Quite frankly, if there is a resurrection, they would have to give account of things they did, but this way they don't have to. You wouldn't think religious leaders would think that way, but these are religious leaders.

(Matthew 22:23) "On that day some Sadducees (who say there is no resurrection) came to Jesus and questioned Him."

And they give a particular incident in which they believed that they were able to show by the Law that Jesus was thinking wrong in this whole resurrection thing.

(Matthew 22:24) "Asking, "Teacher, Moses said, 'IF A MAN DIES HAVING NO CHILDREN, HIS BROTHER AS NEXT OF KIN SHALL MARRY HIS WIFE, AND RAISE UP CHILDREN FOR HIS BROTHER.'

(Matthew 22:25) "Now there were seven brothers with us; and the first married and died, and having no children left his wife to his brother;

(Matthew 22:26) so also the second, and the third, down to the seventh.

(Matthew 22:27) “Last of all, the woman died.

(Matthew 22:28) “In the resurrection, therefore, whose wife of the seven will she be? For they all had married her.”

(Matthew 22:29) But Jesus answered and said to them, “You are mistaken, not understanding the Scriptures nor the power of God.””

That's the worst thing you could say to a lawyer, “You don't understand the law.”

(Matthew 22:30) “For in the resurrection they neither marry nor are given in marriage, but are like angels in heaven.

(Matthew 22:31) “But regarding the resurrection of the dead, have you not read what was spoken to you by God:

(Matthew 22:32) ‘I AM THE GOD OF ABRAHAM, AND THE GOD OF ISAAC, AND THE GOD OF JACOB’? He is not the God of the dead but of the living.””

Now, this hinges on one little word, “I AM,” present tense, which means if God said this, and this is a quote that was actually given to Moses, so by the time Moses lived, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob were dead, how could God say, “I AM their God”? How could He be their God present if there is no resurrection? Jesus proved that there was a resurrection by one little word, “I AM,” present tense. Scripture is telling us that one little word makes a big difference. Man doesn't see truth, first of all, because he's not looking for it, but secondly, he's wanting whatever he decides the truth will be to fit in with his lifestyle. If he can perceive that somehow, he can be elevated by his way of thinking, then he'll twist the Scripture to say whatever they want to. But Christ looks at us and the word of God begins to move and says, “Do you want the truth, or don't you?” And a person who is searching for truth will find it, but so many of us will go, “I don't know. I guess Scripture contradicts itself.” This would be a particular passage that it would seem like Scripture contradicts itself. Read verse 16 again with me so that we can get back on track.

(Galatians 3:16) “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.”

Well, hey, we've got to go back to the Old Testament to see if that's true. So, if you go back with me in Genesis 12, I mean, either Scripture is true or it's not. So, the promise that's given to Abram at this time in Genesis 12 as God calls him forth from his country, “I'm going to make you a great nation. I'm going to bless you. You're going to be a blessing. But you've got to drop on down in the passage, and the Lord gives him a promise. The passage starts in verse 7,

(Genesis 12:7) “... “To your descendants I will give this land.” So he built an altar there to the LORD who had appeared to him.”

Now, if I'm reading this right and you're reading this right, I have a plural there. I don't have a singular. If you go to Genesis 13:15, where God gives the promise again to Abraham, and it says this,

“For all the land which you see, I will give it to you and to your descendants...”

Do you have an “s” there, a plural? Then if I were to go a little bit further in the promise, Genesis 17:7,

“I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants...”

I have a plural there too. Now, let me go back to what Paul writes.

(Galatians 3:15) “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds” ...”

By the way, the word in the Old Testament, “descendants,” is actually the word “seed.” So, He does not say “to seeds” with that plural, and yet he seems to be saying that in the Old Testament, doesn't He? Would it surprise you to know that in the Hebrew that word is actually a singular? It is the singular masculine. So, when he says “to your descendants,” it actually reads, “to your descendant.” Now, it doesn't mean that it's wrong to see that God was going to bless all the people that were to come behind it because it could actually be singular in which it referred to a singular group of people. However, Paul was correct. It was singular in the Old Testament. Every time it's mentioned, and you see it with the “s” in there, it can refer to the group of people, but it is a singular. Paul is saying there's a reason why it was a singular in the Old Testament. Even though it would refer to many would be blessed, it's because the blessing would come through the promise of God. Man would have a tendency to focus on the many and miss the point because we're not thinking spiritually, right.

So, the way that it reads, if you go back to Galatians 3,

(Galatians 3:16) “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say, “And to seeds,” as referring to many, but rather to one, “And to your seed,” that is, Christ.

(Galatians 3:17) What I am saying is this: the Law, which came four hundred and thirty years later...”

I'm not going to go into the details of that, but there are interesting details about that.

“... does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God...”

“Ratified” is the authority saying, “This is a done deal.” That's an authority declaring this is a legal document. What was ratified by God was the promise. Now, I want you to underline the word “promise.” You're going to see it several times.

Verse 16, “Now the promises were spoken to Abraham...”

You drop on down again, verse 18,

“For if the inheritance is based on law, it is no longer based on a promise; but God has granted it to Abraham by means of a promise.”

“*Epangelia*” is the word that is used in the Greek within the text, and he's referring to a free will announcement is made; a freely given pledge to somebody, a promise. It's not something that you had to give under duress or there was a legal document in that sense, but it was a promise and a commitment that you wanted to make because you wanted to make it. That's what a promise is. He begins to convey that the promise of God takes precedence over any legal thing that comes. Of course, the Law came 430 years later. So, would it nullify the promise? What he's doing is, he's substantiating the value of a promise over a legal document. Now, man's ears will perk up to “legal documents,” and he'll perceive, “Wow, that's really important.” But Paul would say, “What's more important than a promise, a promise made by God and a promise ratified by God that it wouldn't ever, ever be changed?” He gets their attention with the pragmatic, and he takes them into the realm of the spiritual. What's more valuable? The promise or the Law? To us, even at this particular juncture, it's probably hard to grasp the debate or the argument that's being had here. So, I did a lot of thinking about this, and I did a lot of talking to the Lord about this, and I said, “Lord, how can we convey what is actually being said here in a very practical way?” And it was just like something popped. A while back, there was this interesting, bizarre thing that happened in our nation, they call it COVID. For the last I remember, I think it was the flu. But you know, you give it a name and a number next to it and it sounds a little bit more ominous and foreboding. So, we did it and the laws and the pressure of the laws, the pressure of our peers began to weigh heavy on us, what man said. People can say, “You know, it really doesn't matter what man says. I'm led by the Spirit, whatever.” But the fact of the matter is it weighs heavy on us, what people think. That's exactly what the Galatians were going through. People wore a mask. Look, I'm not a medical guy, but I don't think they worked. People were avoiding people, loved ones. We were sequestering old people that couldn't take care of themselves, and they were dying alone. It was all under the peer pressure of the law. We couldn't think spiritually because the only thing we could think of, “What will people think of me? What will they do? What will they say?” It was impossible for us to think in the realm of the Spirit because the law had so overshadowed the legality. We had elevated it to such an extent, that's what we lived by; that's what we'd go by. The problem with that is it not only suppresses the Spirit, it eradicates the spirit in our life.

There is actually a law in Vermont, Minnesota and Rhode Island called a Good Samaritan law. If in fact you pass by somebody in need and you don't stop and help them, you could actually be a criminal for doing that. That's an interesting law, that the law would actually tell you can't pass by somebody and not help them. You know the wonderful thing about those laws? I would be feeling it anyway. The Spirit would be moving me to help the person anyway. Why did they pull out the Good Samaritan? Because he helped anyway. There wasn't any law that told this Samaritan, who was really hated and disdained by the Jews, to stop and help this guy. What was it that motivated him to do that? And the answer is, the Spirit. He saw the man. He couldn't leave him. He couldn't not do something. It was the Spirit that was moving him and one of the grave concerns about this is that God wants the Spirit of God to control your life. Man is so concerned about, "Well, did Abraham do it or did this person do it?" He's looking around for what everybody else is saying, how everybody else is feeling about it, and the damage that is being done to oftentimes the innocent. I mean, do you know that you can actually be arrested by neglecting childcare? I mean, you don't even have to do anything bad towards the child. If you neglect helping them, feeding them, taking care of them, you can be arrested for that. Did you know that? See, the law even knows that's not right, and yet, don't you think it was bizarre that oftentimes during these problems with this illness that we were neglecting people? Was not your spirit within you going, "We can't do this. We have to help. We can't step back and do nothing"? The Scripture is telling you, walk by the Spirit of God. The Spirit of God is telling us what the truth is. We know what the truth is. I mean, you actually have to suppress it, according to Romans 1 and set it aside. You have to work at not listening to it because you know it's self-evident in our lives. God is working in life. We know what the truth is. God says, "Let the Spirit of God move, walk by the Spirit and thus fulfill the Law of God. That's what God wants you to do. There's a lot of pressure, isn't there, what man thinks?" And don't think for one moment it doesn't affect you, it does, but you've got to say, "You know what? I'm just going to do what God tells me to do." You go back to Galatians 1, "Who am I trying to please, man or God? I've got to do what is right. It may not feel right by everybody else, but I know it is. The Spirit of God is moving."

One of the great passages in Scripture, Romans 8:1, "There is therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus." Isn't that a great text?

1 John 1:9, "If you confess your sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you your sins and to cleanse you from all in righteousness." The Spirit of God is telling you that's true. God has come, and He's forgiven you your sins. If you'll confess them before God, done. Now, you may have people in your life that will continue to condemn you. You may have people in your life that will continue to point out your faults, but I can tell you the Spirit of God says, "If you confess those sins, He is faithful and just to forgive you, and He'll cleanse you from all unrighteousness." My spirit bears witness with His Spirit that this is true, and I don't have to

walk anymore according to what anybody else thinks or anybody else cares about, I can just walk in the freeing of the Spirit. Therefore, as Paul will write in Galatians 5, it was for freedom that Christ came to set you free, from what man thinks, from the laws that man puts on you. I mean, free from the laws of man does not mean that you are not law abiding, it means that you're going to do what's right because the Spirit of God is moving you to do that; not because you're afraid of what everybody else is thinking. What a different way to live. Isn't that far more freeing? Isn't that what we want to do? Are you living by the promises of God, or are you living by the standards of legalism? If you're living by the promises of God, you're standing on the promises of God. What a wonderful life you have to live, because everything I'm doing is opening up blessings for me rather than everything I'm doing, I have to be afraid that something's going to fall on me. There's a different kind of motivation.

Paul is trying to bring [them] back from the legality, into the promises and showing that the promises are far superior to even the Law. Even at this particular juncture, the promises were so much higher than the Law that the Law couldn't mess with it.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and it's our desire to walk according to promises; standing on Your promises. A lot of people are trying to live our lives for us, trying to delegate, trying to put pressure on us to think the way they want us to think, to do the things they want us to do. How freeing it is to come to You and to hear Your words, "I promise you." I mean, You promise me You'll never leave me nor forsake me. You promised me that You would prepare a place for me. You promised me that You would cause all things to work together for good if I love You and walk according to Your purpose. You promised me that You would take away my sins if I would just confess them to You. You promised. You promised me that I would have everlasting life. How wonderful it is that I can bank on the promises; that I don't have to live in the realm of, "I have to do this," or "I have to do that." But You freely gave me this not as a result of anything that I have done or the works, performance, anything that I've done, but simply because You loved me. I didn't earn this, but You freely gave it to me. Now, all I have to do is freely receive it.

Dearly beloved, what we're asking you to do is walk in the spirit of gratitude of what Christ has done for you; begin to listen to the Spirit of God that will tell you to walk in the way of Christ. Walk in the world in which there is not the oppression or the concern about what everybody else is thinking, but about ending every day, "Well done, good and faithful servant." Could you imagine living a day like that?