

Intro: Did anyone search for anything online using the Internet search engine, Google? Almost everyone I know uses Google. Even my technologically challenged father, uses Google. One study shows that 56% of all internet users, Google search themselves.

This week I caught a story in the Huffington Post, with the headline: "Google Breaks Its Promise to Never Show Banner Ads." If you search for Southwest or US Virgin Airlines, you will see a test banner that Google is poised to begin selling for advertisement space. Now, if you search, Redemption Hill Church...

Some users will inevitably like this new feature, and others will be annoyed having to scroll past and ignore the constant barrage of marketing. The point of the story is that Google went back on their promise.

Perhaps this might not seem like a big deal. I think we would all agree: it's one thing if we are talking about promises about advertising on the internet. It's a different story when we are talking about promises that can radically alter the course of your week, the course of your year, or the course of your life.

Have you ever been promised something you never received? P. Have you ever made a promise you failed to keep? P. God sets forth promises in Scripture that hold the power to change your life today and alter your eternal destiny.

So this morning we are going to encounter . . .

### **"The God of Promise" Galatians 3:15-29**

Context: Last week we saw that Jesus became a curse for us that we might receive the blessing and the promised Spirit through faith. Now he is going to take us deeper into what it means to experience the blessings of God's promise.

**The Point: All the promises of God belong to us through Christ.**

#### **I. Understand God wants you to experience him as the God of Promise (3:15-22)**

We are going to receive a crash course in redemption history here in these few verses. We will cover roughly 2,000 years with the quickness. Buckle up. *Read 15-22*

The basic argument Paul makes to those who are trumpeting the superiority of the law is that God's covenant with Abraham takes priority over his covenant with Moses.

- We could trace the overall storyline of the Bible through the covenants God makes with his people. God made a covenant with Adam, a covenant with Noah, we're going to look at the covenants with Abraham and Moses, and then he made a covenant with David and promised a new covenant that would be established by Christ.
- God is a Covenant Making God. In these covenants, God promises blessing on his people. "I will make you fruitful. I will give you land as an inheritance. I will be your God."

So what is the difference between the Abrahamic & Mosaic Covenants? Why is God's Covenant with Abraham the priority in redemptive history?

- 1) The Abrahamic covenant is fundamental because it precedes the Mosaic Covenant (15 & 17).
  - Paul begins by saying in verse 15 that human covenants are unbreakable.

- This is similar to our understanding of a will. A will is a document that specifies how a person's estate will be distributed after his or her death.
- So the argument moves from the lesser to the greater. If human covenants can't be altered, how much more is God's covenant unalterable?

2) He also highlights the priority of the Abrahamic covenant, because it was given directly by God to Abraham, not through an intermediary as verses 19-20 point out.

3) Most importantly, the Abrahamic covenant is built on promise where as the Mosaic covenant is built on law (16 & 18).

Promises highlight the work of God. I will, I will, I will...

- Now, you know this in your experience, but let me state the obvious as we reflect on this text: A promise made is only as good as the promise giver. Can the one making the promise be trusted? Will they come through? Will they be able to deliver on their intentions?
- And the answer when it comes to God is always a resounding "Yes!" God is faithful. He always finishes what he starts. "Not one word his ever failed." (Deut 32)

Laws highlight the work of man. Do this. Don't do that...

- It is either through the promise or the law? You can't have it both ways.
- The promise is given to Abraham's offspring, who is Christ (Gen. 3:15). God's covenant with Abraham was to take him into the land of promise. But through Christ through whom we receive not just land, but the world!
- So Paul argues that the covenant of promise with Abraham takes priority.

Then what is the purpose of the law? (19-22)

- Paul tells us in verse 19. "The law was given because of transgressions." What does he mean?
- It is true that the law was given to restrain sin, clearly setting God's expectations and will for his people. But the law cannot ultimately restrain sin, because our hearts are the real issue. Christianity is not about behavior modification. Jesus brings heart transformation.
- It is also true that the law was given to define sin. Listen to Paul in Romans 3:19-20: "**Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.**" **Romans 3:19-20)**
- We know what sin is because the law defines it. It effectively shuts our mouth. The law comes in and says, you did that, you broke that, don't talk back, you're guilty, and you will answer for it! This is what Paul is saying in verse 22 when he says Scripture imprisoned everything under sin.
- And this gets at what Paul is emphasizing in these verses.
- The law was given to show how sinful we are at our core. It was given to increase sin. Every time we step over the line of God's will for our lives, our sinful deeds and the associated guilt piles up like a mountain, helping us see the depth of our need for grace.
- *John Stott said this about Galatians 3: "The purpose of the law was . . . to lift the lid off man's respectability and disclose what he is really like underneath—sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God, and helpless to save himself. And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. . . . It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth." (Stott, 92-93)*

So what is the relationship between the Abrahamic Covenant & Mosaic Covenant, the promise and the law?

- The law and promise go together but play different roles. The law cannot give life. The law exposes how badly we need life because sin brings death.

- The law, then, drives us to promise, showing our great need due to our sinfulness, but God's great provision due to his faithfulness to keep his promise.

Pic: Have you ever been on a road trip and started to get hungry... And then suddenly, there it is Cracker Barrel, Exit 117.

There's only one problem, you realize you're just past mile marker 32... so the signs keep pointing, billboard after billboard .. tantalizing you... You try to avoid eye contact with them... And nothing will really satisfy until you're there.

- The law is like a sign, designed to point us to the promise, and the promise is fulfilled in Christ.
- Our failure to keep the law should create this desperate hunger that says, "I've got to have that..."

But now that Christ has come and faith in Christ, the pointing is accomplished... This is what we see in vv. 23-29.

Trans: Not only should we understand God wants us to experience him as the God of Promise, we also must . . .

## **II. Cling to the promises of God through faith in Christ (Galatians 3:23-29)**

Here's what's going on in chapter 3: Paul introduces Abraham, not simply as the model of justification by faith, but even more so because all who share his faith share in "the redemptive blessings God promised to him."

He wraps up his argument concerning Abraham, the man of faith, by saying, everyone who has faith in Christ is a son of Abraham, son of God, and an heir of everything God gives his children.

*Trans:* So what are the promises of our Covenant Keeping God? What is our inheritance?

Salvation, in the most stunning and comprehensive sense. Let me highlight what is in the text and then we're going to chase the implications of this to the point where I hope you will make it your practice to daily identify and cling to all of the promises of God. #1)

### ***We are sons & daughters in Christ (26).***

- Through faith, we are brought into God's family. Now Jon will unpack this next week, but let me highlight how far the blessing of relationship reaches to give us access to God.
- We are not simply acquaintances. He is not allowed us to simply get a taste of his glory (a little dab...). He has brought us completely into himself. We are in Christ, completely untied with him, and he is in us!
- Just tell yourself, "I can't wrap my mind around that."
- Paul tells us how this is pictured in *verse 27*.

### ***We have been baptized into Christ (27).***

- We like to say that baptism is a drama of the gospel.
- On November 17<sup>th</sup>, we will celebrate new life in Christ and watch as people follow Christ in baptism. What will happen there?
- We are a Baptist church, that means we practice baptism by immersion, taking someone completely under the water and bringing them back out of the water.
- Baptism is the going public of the story God is writing on the heart of a new believer's life. We go under the water to picture our death to our old way of life, that we have been (in the words of Gal. 2:20), crucified with Christ and we no longer live, but Christ lives within us!

- In the same way, the picture of Christ's life in us by his Spirit is seen when a person comes out of the water, raised to newness of life.
- Baptism is an outward symbol of an inward reality, namely that we are completely and unequivocally identified with Christ. Just as Christ died; we died. Just as Christ was raised; we have been raised.
- This is why we practice baptism by immersion. Not sprinkling, not pouring. Immersion. And verse 27 further argues for the validity of immersion because it says those who are baptized into Christ, have "put on Christ."
- We do not put on a little of Christ. We put on all of Christ. We do not receive a little of the Spirit, just a sprinkle.
- I am not trying to demean anyone's experience in baptism. Perhaps you were baptized after you believed in Christ by sprinkling or pouring. We would never question the intention or sincerity behind that. At the same time, we would invite you to experience the full meaning of baptism through what we believe is the most biblical way.
- Baptism not only identifies you with Christ and his people publically, but serves as a means of grace every time you see someone baptized that all of this is true for you.
- So, some of you are new believers, and you are saying, "Yes. I want to display, tell the story of God moved me from death to life, how he cleansed me of all my sin, and how I have been completely covered, united in him."
- Some of you may have been baptized in a different manner and feel like you should follow Christ through baptized like I just described.
- Let us know... (Connect Card)

Trans: We are completely One with him. And we are One with one another

### ***We are one in Christ (28).***

Look around the room. For every person who has trusted in Christ to save them, there is absolutely nothing that separates you. You are united. There are no barriers. Christ has removed them all.

- Ethnicity does not divide us. We are family in Christ.
- Social status (Rank/Socioeconomic) does not divide us. We are family in Christ.
- Gender does not divide us. We are family in Christ.
- Verse like this one fuels who we desire to be as a church. We are not a white church, brown church, or black church. We are not a rich church, poor church, or middle-class church. We are Christ's church!
- This does not mean we no longer have any social distinctions. Our ethnicity still matters. The differences in how God made us as male and female still matter after we are in Christ. The point is that he has united as his sons and daughters, which brings us to *verse 29*.

### ***We belong to Christ (29).***

- "And if you are Christ's" All of our life belongs to him.
- Here's is Paul's whole point: if you are Christ's, then you are in with Abraham, and there is nothing else you need to do to belong to God's family. Not circumcision. Not nothing.

Trans: Now don't miss this last phrase... And because we are sons of God, have been baptized into Christ, one together with him, belonging completely to him . . .

### ***We are heirs with Christ (29).***

- We should feel ring of triumph... What is Christ's, is ours. Complete fellowship with God? Ours. The life that God intended for us all along, aka shalom, aka flourishing in his presence? Ours. Victory over death? Ours. The world? Ours. You don't believe that?
- 1 Cor. 3..."**So let no one boast in men. For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos or Cephas or the world or life or death or the present or the future—all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's.** (1 Corinthians 3:21-23)

## Conclusion

So... to conclude our time, I want us to consider the promise that is ours in Christ. If you are in Christ, you are recipients of incomprehensibly "precious and very great promises." (2 Peter 1:3-4)

Scripture is replete with the promises of God. Like a hailstorm of grace, the promises of God hit us on page after page of Scripture. Let me highlight a few...

*If you are **weary, weak and lonely** . . . he says, "fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand." (Isaiah 41:10)*

*If you are **anxious** . . . "casting all your anxieties on him, because *he cares for you.*" (1 Peter 5:7)*

*If you are **making decisions** and need direction: "If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given him." (James 1:5) or Proverbs 3:5-6 "he will make straight your path."*

*If you have an **uncertain future**: "Those who seek the Lord lack no good thing." (Psalm 34:10)*

*For those **seeking godliness**: "Blessed are those who hunger and thirst... (Matt 5:6)*

*Are you **suffering** today? "Our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that is to be revealed." (Romans 8:18)*

*Have you been **persecuted** in any way? "Blessed are those who are persecuted for righteousness' sake, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven."*

*If you **doubt** his goodness, if you doubt God is for you, just look to the cross: "**What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?**" (Romans 8:31-32)*

- God's past faithfulness and grace give us every reason to have immense confidence in his future grace.

*How about a promise for **every moment**? "**For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.**" (Romans 8:38-39)*

"all the promises of God find their Yes in [Christ]. That is why it is through him that we utter our Amen to God for his glory." (2 Corinthians 1:20) Cling to these promises and live in light of these promises by giving your entire self to him!

**"Since we have these promises, beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from every defilement of body and spirit, bringing holiness to completion in the fear of God." (2 Corinthians 7:1)**

Invite Micah... Lord's Supper.. We're going to sing of God's greatness, and while we do, our ushers are going to come forward to serve us the Lord's Supper...

One of the beautiful aspects of partaking of this meal that Christ established is gratitude as we remember his sacrifice for us. That is what the word "Eucharist" means, thanksgiving. As we enter into a time of responding to Word, I want you to reflect on all of these great promises and invite you to gratitude. . . .

