

Fourth Sunday in Lent: Galatians 4:21–31

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Notes - 10/21/07

Ro 4:4,5,8 Ro 5:1 Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

Lk 18:9 Parable to those who trusted in themselves. This man went down to his house justified.

Luke 18:19 And Jesus said unto him, Why callest thou me good? none is good, save one, that is, God.

Acquittal - Legal term

Transferred from someone else's account to mine.

Assets - deficits (___ what I once thought assets, are now

Zech 3 My righteousness

Which are filthy rags - I'm stripped of and the righteousness which are the righteousness of Christ.

Galatians 4:30 Cast out the bondwoman and her son:

Gen 21:8 (a great feast the same day Isaac weaned) (9) Son of Hagar mocking, (10) cast out

Gen 21:11 grievous in Abraham's sight, (12) God said hearken unto Sarah

Gen 30:1 give me children or else I die, (2) Am I God - close thy womb

Saved by works (Christ's works). Rome says our works. Paul constraints:

Works vs. / grace works vs. / faith The righteousness of . _____ vs. / righteousness from God.

Christ merits alone - makes righteous

Imputation of Christ's righteousness - a gift

Galatians - Law / Gospel

Isa 54: Sing O Barren

Defense against gift - works of law

God's mercy - sends to desert - barren land

Flesh = works

Law as long as he lives

Marries / joins - Spirit

Ro 7

Where are people / you living?

In Him. (Who? Rev. 21 Name is W.O.G.)

God is Spirit

My words are spirit and life

New Husband - washing

Preaching - presents perfect

Jn 15 Abide in me (vine / branches)

Eph 5 Fruit of the spirit is

Abundant life (works = flesh, desert, barren)

Mt. 5 Blessed are poor - they need their husband

No longer strong

Work of God - humbled - passive

Received imputed works of Christ

No longer defensive /against gift. Open to husband

They love this giver of life

They sing His praise

Lk 4 _____ their song - they bear

I know you didn't love me. But my love will have to be enough for both of us.

She's now become a fruitful garden (enclosed)

The fruit of the gospel

Ph 3:8-(9) And be found in him, not having mine own righteousness, which is of the law,

She's counted all the glories of this world as loss

Ph 3:12 not that she's already attained perfection - but she trusts her husband - to finish the work. In short, she trusts her husband and gives up on her abilities.

For he has married her. Bone of his bones. While she still has 2 natures - spirit / flesh - flesh is like her family tree - Adam - totally depraved - her mother is a Hittite, her natural relatives are Ishmaelites.

He's taken her with all the baggage.

She is dead (at the marriage altar). She lives by faith in her husband - free to be married to another - she has a new song.

The desert has become a beautiful garden

Song of Solomon 4:9-12-15 A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters and springs

A garden ENCLOSED - in what? Christ, in Christ - move and have being.

She has become a new creation

Isa 43:18-20 Remember not the former things - neither consider the things of old

(19) Rivers in desert

2 Cor 5:17 New creation - old things are passed away, (19) NOT imputing

Imagine those still in a desert - holding onto old things - still trying (to justify) themselves, still defending themselves against the gift of God's Son, still alive, still offended, still blaming,

still condemned (still not reconciled - preferring to be cut off - when God in His Son has made that all pointless.

Song 2:10 My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Come away my Beloved - from what? All that Christ has made pointless.

Sermon Notes - Don O'Connor - 10.21.07

(The message through Jennifer's ears.)

The Lord has left us stories, and there's a lot more in them than I've gotten out of them.

Sarah hasn't got her new name yet she's still relying on her flesh and hasn't seen the futility of all of her brilliant ideas.

God promises Abraham that he will be real fruitful. How many of you have felt like God said this to you, but on any given day you're wondering, 'How long I've been slaving as a Christian for you. How long have I been believing you. And yet...'"

Abraham and Sarah each get "ah" added to their names. They receive the name of God later on

Genesis 16:1-4 (KJV) Now Sarai Abram's wife bare him no children: and she had an handmaid, an Egyptian, whose name was Hagar. [2] And Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. [3] And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife.

[4] And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived: and when she saw that she had conceived, her mistress was despised in her eyes. It wasn't so much Sarah's idea, than Abraham's submission to his wife. That's where all that started. God didn't blame Eve; he blamed Adam.

We're going to read this and still demand that God be reasonable; that think we can fit God into our reasonable reality. We think we've got God all figured out.

Genesis 17:1-6 (KJV) And when Abram was ninety years old and nine, the Lord appeared to Abram, and said unto him, I am the Almighty God; walk before me, and be thou perfect. [2] And I will make my covenant between me and thee, and will multiply thee exceedingly. [3]

And Abram fell on his face: and God talked with him, saying, [4] As for me, behold, my covenant is with thee, and thou shalt be a father of many nations. [5] Neither shall thy name any more be called Abram, but thy name shall be Abraham; for a father of many nations have I made thee. [6] And I will make thee exceeding fruitful, and I will make nations of thee, and kings shall come out of thee.

Sarah laughs at the promise. "We know this is impossible. How can I be fruitful? I've been a Christian for 20 years and I still don't see the joy and the peace in my life. Come on!"

God won't stay in the Old Testament, but he is the same God.

Galatians 3:22-23 (KJV) But the scripture hath concluded all under sin, that the promise by faith of Jesus Christ might be given to them that believe. [23] But before faith came, we were kept under the law, shut up unto the faith which should afterwards be revealed.

Before faith comes to be, I am under the law, daily. When I won't trust God, his Word, his promise, his oath, I get under the law. The purpose of the law wasn't to be married to the law, it was just a schoolmaster. What's that? When you're out of school, you have a new master who becomes your husband. The goodness of the law, if it is given for the right purpose, is as a schoolmaster for children.

Galatians 3:25-26 (KJV) But after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster. [26] For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

Galatians 3:27-29 (KJV) For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. [28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus. [29] And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

"Put on," is like a garment or robe. When you go under the water of Baptism, it covers you. Singular seed, one seed, born of the Spirit, the seed of the Woman, the church (the true mother is Jerusalem from Above), the gift of Christ.

Galatians 3:29 (KJV) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

"What does it matter that I'm an heir if I still don't have enough money?" You have a gospel problem and it is affecting every area of your life. It's hard for them to make a correlation between a gospel problem and everyday life.

Galatians 4:1 (KJV) Now I say, That the heir, as long as he is a child, differeth nothing from a servant, though he be lord of all; If the child doesn't come to faith, trust, maturity (trust), he is still under tutors and governors and he has to be brought there, although he might be kicking and digging his heels in all the way.

Galatians 4:2 (KJV) But is under tutors and governors until the time appointed of the father.

The time appointed by the Father may have nothing to do with us.

Galatians 4:3 (KJV) Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

Elements of this world - moralities of this world: be good, be friendly, smile, etc. "Please don't say anything about suffering. You're bringing me down." Forget about any symbols of Christianity like the cross. What's important is getting all you can out of this life. I don't think this is all that important anymore. I'm not saying you need to sleep on nails. You are married to a billionaire. It's hard for us to believe that we have a gospel problem most of the time. 99% of us are caught up in middle-class America. It's just the way it is. Don't worry. Don't fret. Serve the King of Babylon. Either that, or if anyone comes up with a good plan from the Lord; back to the farm, or something like that, let me know. It would just be trying to escape though.

Galatians 4:4-6 (KJV) But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, [5] To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons. [6] And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father. Daddy! Father! Imagine a time when you couldn't even say that word, Daddy, because you were so angry. Now because the Son is in our heart we can cry out Daddy. How does the Son of God act toward all men?

Genesis 21:8 (KJV) And the child grew, and was weaned: and Abraham made a great feast the same day that Isaac was weaned. Have you been weaned from the law, or do you still want law? I'm not going to answer all of your questions today. I hope to provoke you to think a little bit. It's the Holy Spirit's job, anyway.

Isaac is weaned and they had a party, like the parties we have when we overcome some little thing.

Genesis 21:9 (KJV) And Sarah saw the son of Hagar the Egyptian, which she had born unto Abraham, mocking.

The works of the flesh is mocking, and the Ishmael spirit is mocking the seed of Abraham, whose seed you are.

Galatians 4:19 (KJV) My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you,

Here is the heart of a father. If you're a father, you live in birth pains for your children. The Galatians wouldn't be weaned. They wanted to go back to Hagar, do something outward like being circumcised. You will do much more than you ever have to do, but it won't be you. Unless it is Christ, the active doer, it is all vanity. Think of the things in our past life we would do in the name of love.

Galatians 4:21-22 (KJV) Tell me, ye that desire to be under the law, do ye not hear the law? [22] For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, the other by a freewoman.

You are first born of the flesh, born of law. How long do you want to stay there? Only until you grow up - until you're weaned.

Galatians 4:23-25 (KJV) But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. [24] Which things are an allegory: (poetic, allegory, metaphir, hyperbole) for these are the two covenants; the one from the mount Sinai, which gendereth to bondage, which is Agar. [25] For this Agar is mount Sinai in Arabia, and answereth to Jerusalem which now is, and is in bondage with her children.

What Jerusalem is that? Jerusalem is contrasted to the other Jerusalem, the one that is in the world today, which is in bondage to Hagar, law.

Galatians 4:26-27 (KJV) But Jerusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all. [27] For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband.

It is God who opens and closes the womb of your heart and mind. If God doesn't want fruit yet, he'll keep us in a fruitless, desert place until we're able to deal with it. Imagine what would have happened if you had some of your high aspirations fulfilled. Being married to Nabal might not work out. Abigail got a new husband, however. Imagine a woman whose husband is

a billionaire. She is always charitable and giving. Imagine what would happen if God gave you your \$2 billion inheritances right now. Whose money is it anyway?

Isaiah 54:1 (KJV) Sing, O barren, thou that didst not bear; break forth into singing, and cry aloud, thou that didst not travail with child: for more are the children of the desolate than the children of the married wife, saith the Lord.

Galatians 4:27-28 (KJV) For it is written, Rejoice, thou barren that bearest not; break forth and cry, thou that travailest not: for the desolate hath many more children than she which hath an husband. [28] Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise.

What did Isaac get from his father? Everything. Wherever Abraham dug, there he found water. Drink deeply from the well of Bethlehem; it never runs out. David even wanted a drink from the well of Bethlehem. Other waters could not refresh him. Bethlehem - where Jesus was born, the house of the true bread which if you eat of it, you'll never hunger again.

Galatians 4:29 (KJV) But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. This can take place in your own family, in your own mind. The law can persecute you. "You should have. You didn't." Or you can go the other way. "It was their fault, his fault, her fault." The good news of total depravity is that it takes you out of the game, out of Jerusalem from below now paying that game. We agree with our Husband, who we are married to. While we were yet sinners he married us. When he marries you, all that is his is yours.

"Well, Don, it doesn't seem that way. If all that is his is mine, where's my Cadillac?" I didn't say you couldn't get a Cadillac. But when he becomes your husband, he becomes your joy. The things of world grow strangely dim. He draws us and one of the ways he draws us is, for an example, as he drew the prodigal. He had nothing to eat out there in the wilderness. When he came back, he still had his story of how he would shape up a bit. Your husband is used to that old story. He knows it. Have you tried to have a relationship and you just blew it. Even though forgiveness was pronounced, you didn't receive it. It's a normal way to think, that you have to be punished a little more, do without, be more miserable for your sins, and earn your way back. That's the prodigal son the Father loves. The father is waiting to put a robe, a garment on the young man. He wants to clothe the young man. The young man says, "I have sinned." You don't hear it too much these days. Until you hear this, all you can give them is law. They are secure sinners who think they can bluff the father. "You owe it to me." What did Isaac get?

Everything. As he was, so are you. I'm looking around at some doubts here, like this is some new story. It is.

Galatians 4:28-29 (KJV) Now we, brethren, as Isaac was, are the children of promise. [29] But as then he that was born after the flesh persecuted him that was born after the Spirit, even so it is now. You'd better believe there is a Jerusalem from below that will persecute you for not being circumcised - doing some outward thing they think you should do. Didn't you do this also? They can even be in your own household.

We fellowship as sinners. "He's judging me." No, you don't understand him. He's totally depraved and wondering why you won't receive the same forgiveness he has received. Who can judge anyone, if they're totally depraved? He won't leave us like that, but all the doing is his doing. There will still be persecution from anybody who is walking after the flesh. They will justify themselves even at your expense. "You need to do something under the law."

As far as this world goes, antinomianism doesn't work. "I'm not under the law." I think it is great that you believe that; something will happen to convince you.

Galatians 4:30 (KJV) Nevertheless what saith the scripture? Cast out the bondwoman and her son: for the son of the bondwoman shall not be heir with the son of the free woman.

He wants me to cast out my flesh? It is amazing how people are so into usury. It doesn't work. Like young men who are trying to make a show for a young woman. Their whole life revolves around how they can get something from you to help them. Start thinking about someone you hate; someone you can't even use. He's thought of himself his whole life. That's all he's ever thought about and he can't understand why she's not enthralled by his good looks. He's checked himself out. What's wrong with her? It is funny, isn't it? What's right with her? She has discernment. "Well, she's putting a law on me." Don't get married if you don't want law put on you. A father travails - he's got birth pains waiting for you to get off all you know. You children ought to be more thankful. You wives ought to be thankful.

Cast her out. You might as well walk after the Spirit and you won't fulfill the lusts of the flesh. If you do, you're no less loved. The fruit comes from the Husband, the vinedresser. Jesus is the true vine. If you abide in him, it's inevitable. There is nothing you do. It is gift.

Galatians 4:31-5:1 (KJV) So then, brethren, we are not children of the bondwoman, but of the free. [5:1] Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not

entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

How do you know someone is standing fast in the liberty they're called to? They're not calculating. They don't have to think because they have a husband. Your husband knows about us.

It is a gift. What we're talking about is a gift. The gospel is a gift. No wonder there is such a heavy defense against the gift. You're forgiven, but that's only half of it. The other half is that he has imputed to you His righteousness. This may not sound very important to some of you. But that righteousness has to do with you standing before Daddy, your Father. He imputes everything Christ did to your account. Imputation is an accounting term. All that Christ did, every law he kept, has been put into your bank account. Now you stand before the Lord. You've received the imputed works of Christ.

Zech. 3:3-5 (KJV) Now Joshua was clothed with filthy garments, and stood before the angel. [4] And he answered and spake unto those that stood before him, saying, Take away the filthy garments from him. And unto him he said, Behold, I have caused thine iniquity to pass from thee, and I will clothe thee with change of raiment. [5] And I said, Let them set a fair mitre upon his head. So they set a fair mitre upon his head, and clothed him with garments (clean garments – perfect garments). And the angel of the Lord stood by.

He loves us, and he does that. Sometimes he'll make you poor. Blessed are the poor in Spirit. Who are they? Those who have been brought to poverty, which is a gift. When you're poor, who do you need? Your husband. But when your husband owes you everything and he's not doing enough... How about abiding, resting? They who believe in their husband, Christ, they enter into Shalom, the rest of God. A lot of people don't have rest. Their countenance is filled with strife. There is no one left to judge.

Total depravity comes from the fall of man. It is not an enlightenment term. The Enlightenment ended when the bombs of science and the ethics of men blew up men, gassed men. There was a lot of optimism and hope in the liberal view until then. The optimism ended right there. A lot of politicians still have hope. They're not even post-modern yet.

Who does he love? You remember what the bride is like? Green teeth would not have any appeal. She's the despised, uncomely, the weak, base, foolish things - sinners. He marries them as that. Doesn't he wait until they get their act together a little? How can I get my act together until I'm married to him?

Steven Hein: The wife says, "I don't think I love him or her anymore." The other in the marriage says, "I knew all along you didn't love me." They get married and they realize one of them didn't love the other. Her heart is cold. "I'll give you my best efforts. I'll try." But Christ, our husband, says, "I knew you didn't love me. When you came to church, and got married to me in the church, I knew you didn't love me, but don't worry. My love is enough for both of us." We were yet without hope in this world, Christ died for the ungodly. Is that your hope, that he died for the ungodly?

It was asked a while back, "How many of you children really think you know something other people here don't know?" You might know some things but they're not worth a hill of beans if you don't know your husband and that his love was enough for both of you.

First she thinks he's hers, but later...

Song 2:8-10 (KJV) The voice of my beloved! behold, he cometh leaping upon the mountains, skipping upon the hills. [9] My beloved is like a roe or a young hart: behold, he standeth behind our wall, he looketh forth at the windows, shewing himself through the lattice. [10] My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Song 4:1 (KJV) Behold, thou art fair, my love; behold, thou art fair; thou hast doves' eyes within thy locks: thy hair is as a flock of goats, that appear from mount Gilead. Doves eyes are not calculating or condemned eyes, but are soft.

Song 4:12 (KJV) A garden inclosed is my sister, my spouse; a spring shut up, a fountain sealed. She's not ready to blossom yet, but she will be. Sometimes we're closed and sealed up, but the Lord, our Husband, knows what he's doing.

Song 4:15 (KJV) A fountain of gardens, a well of living waters, and streams from Lebanon. This comes right into the New Testament, doesn't it? This is who the church is, but she might be sealed up for a time.

Song 4:16 (KJV) Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits. The fruits are for your beloved to eat. "My beloved looks like he's despised and rejected, he looks like a sinner and he's rejected - and un-cool. Are you telling me that the fruits are for him?"

She who was lost becomes found.

Song 4:16 (KJV) Awake, O north wind; and come, thou south; blow upon my garden, that the spices thereof may flow out. Let my beloved come into his garden, and eat his pleasant fruits.

The old woman wanted to be found having a righteousness of her own. She's been doing some things people haven't noticed. God's not interested in me doing anything at all. He becomes the active doer in our life. We're passive. If it's the fruit of the Spirit, it is not the fruit of my flesh.

Where are you getting your life from? Is it coming from your husband? Are you believing him? Fruit will not be something you have to bring forth. It will come forth, but it will be from our husband. He enables us. God has wondrous ways of doing things, and they're not my ways.

Isaiah 55:8-9 (KJV) For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord. [9] For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.

Isaiah 43:18-19 (KJV) Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. [19] Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert.

He takes the bride, in Hosea, out into the wilderness. She was not thankful for the things given her. She was an adulterer, or worse. The wilderness does a good work in me, although I might not always rejoice in it.

Isaiah 43:18-21 (KJV) Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. [19] Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it? I will even make a way in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert. [20] The beast of the field shall honour me, the dragons and the owls: because I give waters in the wilderness, and rivers in the desert, to give drink to my people, my chosen. [21] This people have I formed for myself; they shall shew forth my praise.

Isaiah 43:22 (KJV) But thou hast not called upon me, O Jacob; but thou hast been weary of me, O Israel.

It's good to see it. We can get so familiar with God's Word, his teachings. The only thing that can bring us back is a wilderness, anfechtung - suffering. Suffering either hardens you, or it

brings you to your end, to where you become formed by your husband, until you become a garden, no longer enclosed, but one with living water flowing from it.

Remember not the former things. A lot of people like to remember former offences, and failures. They really like to remember former failures to justify themselves, which always ends in blame.

2 Cor. 5:17 (KJV) Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new. He has given us everything, and put a new robe on us, but we'll not receive all things until the time appointed by the Father.

2 Cor. 5:16-17 (KJV) Wherefore henceforth know we no man after the flesh: yea, though we have known Christ after the flesh, yet now henceforth know we him no more. [17] Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.

Faith sees fruit that doesn't seem to be there; it just trusts its husband. We're tempted all the time to think our husband means our works. Why?

Song 2:10 (KJV) My beloved spake, and said unto me, Rise up, my love, my fair one, and come away.

Come away to the gospel, what your husband has done for you, purchased for you. You were once darkness, but he has called you out. Come away from that Hagarian, natural way of thinking and judging people and events, and abide in me, if you'd like. Of course, he is the one who draws us. When he says, "Come away," you can be sure he'll make a way for you to come. For anything, He is the way. If you have a problem, he is the way, if you'll come to him, but then he draws you. Frankly, I would not naturally come to him, if I've got a Hagarian way of thinking, like Martha. She got busy to keep him away. Have you ever gotten busy? Me too.

I create the fruit of the vine.

It is no longer me that lives. Everything is now gift. We live by gift. Whatever we do is done in thanksgiving. You must bear fruit. How? Abide in the vine. He draws us, but not always as we'd like. He forgives us daily, but not with the forgiveness that says, "You're forgiven, now do better." That wouldn't be relying on your husband. Your husband is a wealthy man. Your song becomes Mary's song. He that is mighty has done great things. My soul magnifies my husband. We believe he is born of the Spirit.

John 6:63 (KJV) It is the spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life.

John 15:5 (KJV) I am the vine, ye are the branches: He that abideth in me, and I in him, the same bringeth forth much fruit: for without me ye can do nothing.

If you abide in my words, and my words in you, you will bear fruit, and have peace, joy and rest in your life – cease from your own works, letting all your burdens go, and enjoy the Sabbath.

There is a war - a challenging of the gospel here today. The enemy does not want you free of him. He wants you working, fretting, trusting in yourself, thinking that if you don't do everything it will not get done. He likes that. He keeps Jerusalem from below bound up in that, persecuting Isaac.

Abide. How? Your Husband. When I was incapable, without hope of abiding in this world, Christ died, our husband died, and it is the circumcision of his blood that is important, not our outward circumcision, works. He who is mighty has done great things. Holy is his Name. My soul doth magnify the Lord.

Blessed are the poor. Blessed are the hungry - those who have been brought to hunger. How many of you have come in here filled, stuffed with cares, accusations, offences. The full go away empty. What will empty you? The Lord.

John McArthur: He believes that the USA, God has let go of.

Hosea 4:17 (KJV) Ephraim is joined to idols: let him alone.

There comes a point when you see the filth that is coming on this nation - idols, wicked abominations, particularly when men exchange their natural affections, when men are perverted. Let them alone. That is one step before hell, when a person hardens their heart continuously, and lives in the vain imaginations of their mind, that is one step before hell. One step before God saying, "You want to be right? You want to be in charge of your life? You want your idols - your vain imaginations? Do what you want then." Let him alone. What kind of floods of spirits are coming in this nation?

Don't worry about it - God is sovereign. This is God's doing. The nations, which are a drop in the bucket, you may have some exalted idea about, like America. Love your country. Receive

the gospel. That is what this country has turned their back on - Jesus. You can wave flags, apple pie, baseball, etc. So what?

Paul said, "I want to be found not having a righteousness of my own." Have you been found? Do you still want to have an offence that justifies you and pretend you don't have it, or do you still think God needs your works? The works of God are freely flowing through the believer. "What must I do to do the works of God?" The works are God's works, and he works through Jerusalem from above, the believer. Belief is trusting in God.

Romans 4:4 (KJV) Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

"You owe me. Now that I've done this for you, and you owe me." When he marries us, he doesn't put that on us. "Oh, I knew you didn't love me when I married you." He already knew. He was not shocked. He may have even brought you to poverty. It is funny, though, when people are brought to poverty. But I am persuaded of better things from you believers. We believe in things we don't see the substance of. The evidence is still true. Sing O Barren - you who don't see fruit.

Romans 4:4 (KJV) Now to him that worketh is the reward not reckoned of grace, but of debt.

Jerusalem from below doesn't need grace. Look at all the charities, the social works. Why do you need God when you've got a social gospel?

Romans 4:5 (KJV) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Are you qualified? Did you qualify today to be justified? What qualified you? Being ungodly. Some children have never heard full strength law, so they think they're not like those people out there in the world, on television. Once they get the catechism really in their hearts, they will begin to know what they believe and why they believe it. How blessed they are. No wonder Luther thought the catechism and Bondage of the Will were his greatest works.

Romans 4:5 (KJV) But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness.

Do you believe in him who justifies the ungodly? What you believe is counted for righteousness for you. Abraham believed God, and God called that righteousness. You are Abraham's seed if you believe God, and God has called him righteous, and you righteous. He

that is mighty has done great things, and holy is his name. Just because he has done that, doesn't mean everyone has received it yet.

The Christian life comes down to your stopping defending yourself against the gift and receiving Christ, which is not of yourself - it too is gift. When I came to Christ, he seemed pretty useful to me, and he let himself be. But did I love him? Let me just say that he has won my love. Yes, he continuously does. Yes, even though I do wrong, I belong.

Romans 4:6-11 (KJV) Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works, [7] Saying, Blessed are they whose iniquities are forgiven, and whose sins are covered. [8] Blessed is the man to whom the Lord will not impute sin. [9] Cometh this blessedness then upon the circumcision only, or upon the uncircumcision also? for we say that faith was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness. [10] How was it then reckoned? when he was in circumcision, or in uncircumcision? Not in circumcision, but in uncircumcision. [11] And he received the sign of circumcision, a seal of the righteousness of the faith which he had yet being uncircumcised: that he might be the father of all them that believe, though they be not circumcised; that righteousness might be imputed unto them also:

His righteousness was in every work he ever did, and that is all yours.

Romans 5:1 (KJV) Therefore being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ:

God doesn't need our works. The fruit will flow. The garden will be unsealed at an acceptable time, when we can deal with it. Imagine what would happen if God gave you \$3 Mil to give away? What would be the temptation? The Gospel is not living the life. The gospel is that you've got something given to you. Did I deserve it? Such a question! The #1 priority for the children is that they know the truth you know, and which you might forget; that you are madly, crazy, bonkers in love with them. I know this is true, along with the sorrows of this life. If they know this, it's the bottom line.

Romans 7:1 (KJV) Know ye not, brethren, (for I speak to them that know the law,) how that the law hath dominion over a man as long as he liveth?

The law has dominion over a man as long as he lives. As long as the church still lives in self-justification, control, and fear, this is Jerusalem from below persecuting the Spirit, being

offended with people who have the Spirit of God because they aren't doing what is expected of them. Think of all they didn't do for you. Think of one person in this room who failed you, who let you down. Who did you let down? Did you let Jesus down again? Peter, are you here today? He's not the least taken back by it, but he doesn't want to leave you that way. He wants the garden to flow. He wants you to be what you are - a fountain of gardens.

Col. 3:3 (KJV) For ye are dead, and your life is hid with Christ in God. All that you once called you has died. The ambition of Adam, the religion of Adam, the offences of Adam have died. Forget the former things. If you're in Christ, you're a new creation - today.

Romans 7:2-4 (KJV) For the woman which hath an husband is bound by the law to her husband so long as he liveth; but if the husband be dead, she is loosed from the law of her husband. [3] So then if, while her husband liveth, she be married to another man, she shall be called an adulteress: but if her husband be dead, she is free from that law; so that she is no adulteress, though she be married to another man. [4] Wherefore, my brethren, ye also are become dead to the law by the body of Christ; that ye should be married to another, even to him who is raised from the dead, that we should bring forth fruit unto God.

Ye also, through the crucifixion, death, burial and resurrection of Jesus Christ, are dead. You've got a new husband now. You might not always feel like you are, and it's okay. When you're married to Christ, you bring forth the fruit of the Holy Ghost. God wants to bring forth peace, love, joy, through the Holy Spirit. But there's no sweat in it. You've become dead to the law. Romans 7:6 (KJV) But now we are delivered from the law, that being dead wherein we were held; that we should serve in newness of spirit, and not in the oldness of the letter.

Just because Abraham's wife laughed, it didn't negate the promise. Have ever seen a 90 year old woman? You'd laugh at the thought too. God likes to deal in absurdities that our reason can't cope with. But God can do anything.

Hebrews 6:13-14 (KJV) For when God made promise to Abraham, because he could swear by no greater, he swore by himself, [14] Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

Galatians 3:29 (KJV) And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. The blessing was not only to Abraham, but to his seed - those who believe Christ. Hebrews 6:14 (KJV) Saying, Surely blessing I will bless thee, and multiplying I will multiply thee.

Sing, O Barren. You're being multiplied, even though you look like Abraham and Sarah, a ragtag band.

Hebrews 6:15-16 (KJV) And so, after he had patiently endured, he obtained the promise. [16] For men verily swear by the greater: and an oath for confirmation is to them an end of all strife.

If God made a promise to you, this should be the end of all strife. If you're a Christian there should be no more contention with your husband, though your heart and flesh fail you daily. He may have to send you to a desert for a while, but that is his love too, his sever mercy.

The key - there's nothing left to do for righteousness. Nothing. It is a gift that is imputed. We could take it for granted. "I can see why you'd pick me." Remember the story from Steven Hein. Sometimes I think I need to hide things from my husband because he might want to get a divorce, break the promise. No.

We sit as receivers, no longer defensive against the gift. Who is, according to you, the least deserving person in this room? Paul was least, chief among sinners, but God's mercy found him.

As you go today, you that bear the vessels, his words are Spirit and life. The mystery of the church is that Christ washes us from everything. The wrath is over.

Father, we thank you again for your Son who purchased us with his blood and leads us to still waters, green pastures. Though our lives look barren, we believe you, we rejoice, we sing. We thank you for the fruit, and pray that we'd be filled with the fruit of the Spirit as sheer gift. Thank you for your forgiveness today.

All your sins are forgiven, for Christ's sake. All of them.

Some people get mad at you, and it's funny to me, when they say I'm sorry, and then they go pouting around, or punishing around, or go silent on you - shoot you some darts, or avoid you. Have you known someone like that? That's the bride. Well, she doesn't look like she loves her husband very much. He first loved us.

The only way to look to him is to have your eyes drawn away from yourself. Carrying a grudge or an offence, or to be condemned is pointless. To be accused is pointless for those who believe. You might as well forget what lies behind, the former things, and just open up your

arms as receivers of God's grace every day, abundance poured into you, pressed down and shaken together, and then flowing out of you.

AMEN

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