

## GALATIANS 3:1-14 – Spirit, Faith & Blessing

### 1. The Holy Spirit STARTED it & it will be the Holy Spirit who FINISHES it (v1-5)

- \* Moral of the Story = You'll never achieve PERFECTION by SARX (flesh, effort, self-discipline) or indeed anything else except PNEUMA (the grace of God & transforming power of the Spirit).
- \* Danger: We receive salvation by GRACE alone, but then try to PERFECT, COMPLETE, MATURE ourselves by our OWN EFFORTS.
- \* Chapter 2 shows us that we are SAVED by the power of the Gospel; chapter 3 shows us we also GROW by the power of that same Gospel. The way the Spirit ENTERED your life should be the very same way He ADVANCES your life.
- \* Paul says depending on the flesh is 'FOOLISH, SENSELESS & SILLY.'
- \* We all need to be prepared to SURRENDER to that Holy Spirit led JOURNEY into the fulness of grace & freedom.

→ *How do you generally trying to 'fix' it? Do you tend to go straight to the Holy Spirit or your own strength, efforts & ideas? Why do we tend to flip-flop between flesh & Spirit? What are the forces & influences that tend to 'bewitch' us?*

→ *What does v5 tell us about how God works transformative miracles in our lives?*

→ *"Yes, we should want to change to become more like Jesus, but no one can do God's job for Him." Discuss! (see Phil 2:12-13)*

→ *Joyce Meyer wrote, "I think it is a tragedy to teach new believers in Christ what they should do & how they need to change without first teaching them who they are in Christ, that they are justified & made right with God by grace through faith & that He loves them unconditionally. When people are rooted in God's love & acceptance, they want to change & easily cooperate with the Holy Spirit." What journey is the Holy Spirit trying to take us on? How does it work & what, according to Joyce Meyer's quote, are the key foundation blocks?*

### 2. You are born of FAITH & blessed through FAITH (v6-9)

- \* Paul calls ABRAHAM as a WITNESS for the DEFENCE.
- \* Abraham's righteousness had to have been BY FAITH, not WORKS of the LAW, because the Law had not been INSTITUTED yet.
- \* Abraham BELIEVED God & it was CREDITED to him as righteousness ... Not because he was PERFECT ... Not because he was so wonderfully LAW-ABIDING ... but because of his FAITH.

- \* Paul's message to his fellow Jews: You receive the BLESSING of ABRAHAM, not because of your NATURAL DESCENT, not because you OBEY the LAW, but because of your FAITH.

→ *Why was Abraham such a crucial witness? What did Paul say we can learn from him? What is the 'Blessing of Abraham?'*

→ *How do we, then, receive the blessing of God? Is it by works or faith? How tempting is it to get seduced back into thinking that the promises of God are somehow earned or deserved? What does it mean to say we receive from God 'by faith?'*

### 3. Law CURSES; Christ REDEEMS us from that curse (v10-14)

v9-10: We have a choice: We can live by relying on the LAW (v10) or by relying on FAITH (v9).

- \* The Kicker: The result of relying on / living by / defaulting to LAW is that you are under a CURSE.

→ *What does it mean to 'rely on' the Law? Why is that so tempting? How is relying on faith harder? Which do you tend to rely on?*

→ *Why is the Law a curse? How is the Law a curse to us? Have you ever been in a church environment characterised by heavy rules and regulations and, if so, how did it make you feel?*

v11: Our call is to LIVE by FAITH (Hab 2:4, Rom 1:17 Heb 10:38, 11:6).

→ *What does it mean to 'live by faith?' In what parts of our lives? How?*

v12: Law & faith pull in OPPOSITE DIRECTIONS. You cannot RELY on both. You're going to have to PICK one or the other.

→ *How strong is the temptation to revert to Law? How good are you at resisting the pull?*

v13-14: The wonderful Good News, the true gospel → Jesus took the CURSE we DESERVED so we could receive the BLESSING He DESERVED.

- \* Because Christ was CURSED, we have become BLESSED (2 Cor 5:21, Gal 3:14, Eph 1:3, 2 Cor 1:20).
  - \* If we BELIEVE God ... If we follow the LEADING of the Spirit ... If we RESIST the TEMPTATION to try to FIX it ourselves, then we can live in the fulness of God's BLESSING.
  - \* Blessed is not what we GET, it's WHO WE ARE.
  - \* We no longer have to live under the CURSE of the LAW. Instead, we get to live in the FREEDOM of the SPIRIT.
- *"If we believe God ... if we follow the leading of the Spirit ... if we resist the temptation to try to fix it ourselves, then we can live in the fulness of God's blessing." Discuss!*
- *"Blessed is not what we get, it's who we are." What does this mean? Can other people see it in you? Why would that be such a powerful witness?*

## DECLARATION PRAYER

Thank You, Lord, for saving me. For the mercy of the Cross, the miracle of the resurrection and the power of Your blood.

Thank You that I have been saved by grace alone, through faith alone and in Christ alone. That I am justified, made righteous and declared blessed. That there is now no shadow of guilt, shame or condemnation. That I am free to live in the fulness of Your Spirit, standing on Your amazing promises and drawing on Your enabling grace.

I declare that, just as I have been saved by faith, I will live by faith. I will put my trust in you, not me. In Your Word, not mine. In Your wisdom, not the world's. In Your grace, not my own strength.

I declare that, just as I have been saved by the power of the Gospel, I will endeavour to grow by the power of the Gospel. I give up trying to better myself and instead choose to cooperate with the transforming power of the Holy Spirit as He walks with me, convicts me and leads me to towards wholeness, goodness, truth and freedom.

I declare that I am dead to the curse of the law and alive to the power of Christ. I give up relying on me. I let go of that list of rules. I stop trying to earn blessing and instead choose to become a blessing. Not seeking the best I can do, but pressing into all You can do in me and through me.

For all this, I give You the praise and glory due to Your great name,

Amen!