The Spirit Rhythm

week 05

Good Behavior Won't Get You Out

Galatians 3:15-29

opening prayer (2 min)

Father, thank You for the promise You made to Abraham and fulfilled in Jesus. Open our eyes to see the bigger picture of what You are doing. Where we are still trying to earn what You have freely given, set us free. Help us rest in Christ and live as Your sons and daughters. Amen.

highlights (13 min)

Big Idea: God fulfills His promise to bless the nations through Christ—the law served that promise, and through faith we become heirs of it.

opening reflection

- Have you ever been so close to a situation that you missed the bigger picture? What helped you finally see it?
- When have you tried to earn something that was meant to be a gift?

Bridge Statement: In Peru, people walked, herded, and farmed across faint grooves in the ground for centuries without realizing they were standing inside the Nazca Lines, giant drawings that can only be seen from the air. In 1937, the Pan-American Highway was built straight through one of them, cutting off a lizard's tail before anyone knew it was there. The Galatians recognized a genuine part of God's revelation, the law, but misread its place in God's unfolding purpose. Paul shows them the bigger picture: the promise God made to Abraham, fulfilled in Christ.

Key Line: It's easy to put a highway through the lizard when you stop seeing the bigger picture.

scripture focus

Read Galatians 3:15–29 aloud.

Context: Paul has just shown that Abraham was counted righteous by faith and that Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. Some accused Paul of being against Moses and the law. Here he explains how the law fits into God's story. God made a promise to Abraham and his offspring—ultimately Christ—430 years before the law was given. The law did not cancel that promise; it served it, revealing sin and guarding God's people until Christ came. Now, through faith, all who belong to Christ are Abraham's offspring and heirs.

time to consider (30 min)

Reflect on what God has spoken through this week's sermon by discussing the key truths together. Take this moment seriously: slow down, listen, and respond to what the Spirit is saying.

1. God's Promise Secures Our Inheritance (Galatians 3:15–18)
Once a human covenant is ratified, no one can annul it. In the same way, God's covenant with Abraham came first and stands firm. The promise was made to Abraham's offspring—one particular descendant, the Messiah—and all who belong to Him are Abraham's offspring too. The law came 430 years later and cannot annul it. Our inheritance is identity, relationship, and future, and it rests on God's word, not our performance. This is relationship language: God loves us that much.

discussion questions

- What difference does it make that your standing with God rests on His promise rather than your performance?
- Which part of your inheritance—identity, relationship, or future—do you most need to hold on to right now?

Insight: Before Moses ever came down the mountain with the commandments, God had already given Abraham His word.

2. God's Law Exposes Our Need (Galatians 3:19–22)

The law is not in conflict with the promise. It was added because of transgressions, to make disobedience visible, like a black light that reveals what a "clean" room is hiding. As Paul says, "I would not have known what it is to covet if the law had not said, 'You shall not covet'" (Romans 7:7). The law does more than inform; it awakens our conscience. But it was never intended to bring life. It is part of the story, not God's conclusion. Scripture confines all under sin, even those who thought their performance made them the exception, so that every mouth may be stopped (Romans 3:19).

discussion questions

- How has God's Word acted like a black light in your life, showing you something you couldn't see on your own?
- Why is it good news that the law shows us we can't save ourselves?

Insight: Good behavior won't get you off death row; only the promise received by faith can.

3. Christ Ends Our Captivity (Galatians 3:23–25)

Before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until faith would be revealed. The law was our guardian, the person in the household responsible for guiding and directing the children for a season. Its purpose was to lead us to Christ. Now that faith has come, its role as guardian is complete. Jesus paid the price; He became a curse for us and took our place on death row at the cross. Justification is a verdict, not a progress report. God isn't saying, "Keep working, and eventually I'll accept you." He declares us righteous through faith in Jesus (Romans 3:21–24).

discussion questions

- Do you relate to God as if your justification were a verdict already given, or a progress report you are still working on? Why?
- Where are you tempted to go back under the "guardian" instead of living in your new status in Christ?

Insight: We don't work for our righteousness; in Christ, God gives us His.

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4. In Christ, We Belong as Heirs (Galatians 3:26–29)
Through faith, we receive our inheritance. Identity: we are united with Christ, Abraham's offspring and participants in God's promise; we know whose we are. Relationship: we are all sons and daughters of God through faith, with equal standing and the same access—there are no rankings in God's house. Future: resurrection, freedom from sin and death, and life in a renewed creation. This inheritance is freely offered right now to all who believe.

discussion questions

- What does it mean for you personally that there are no rankings in God's house?
- How would your week look different if you lived as an heir instead of someone still trying to earn a place?

Insight: Stop trying to earn what has been given to you through promise.

renewal

Reflect: God's promise was intended for you to receive by faith. Step back and look at the bigger picture of what God has done for you in Christ. Where are you still trying to earn what He has already given? What would it look like to receive it by faith this week?

Key Line: See the promise of God and what He has done for you.

missional living (30 min)

1. Read Galatians 3:26–29 each day this week and thank God for one part of your inheritance: identity, relationship, or future.
2. When you catch yourself trying to earn God's acceptance, stop and remind yourself: "It is a verdict, not a progress report."
3. Reach out to someone who feels like an outsider, and treat them as an equal in God's family.

follow-up

Where did you notice yourself treating your faith like a progress report this week? How did remembering God's promise change your response?

closing time of prayer (15 min)

Pray for eyes to see the bigger picture of God's promise, freedom from trying to earn His acceptance, unity in God's family with no rankings, and for those who still need to receive the promise by faith.

final takeaways

- God's promise to Abraham came first, and the law cannot annul it.
- The law serves the promise by exposing our sin and our need for a Savior.
- Good behavior can't set us free; Christ took our place and ended our captivity.
- Justification is a verdict, not a progress report.
- In Christ, we are Abraham's offspring and heirs, with equal standing in God's family.

Memory Verse: *Galatians 3:29 — "And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise."*