

Transcripted offered below unedited

All right. Well, we're at the top of the hour, so we'll let people jump in, but we'll start with prayer. The Lord be with you.

And also with you.

Let us pray. Holy and gracious God, we give you thanks for the gift of this day. For those of us who are experiencing the warmth of the spring weather, we give you thanks. For those who are experiencing health needs, please be with us. And Lord, for the entire world that needs to experience Your peace, we ask our deepest prayers so that we may indeed follow You, whose banner is the Prince of Peace.

All this we ask in the name of one God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

Amen.

Amen.

All right, friends, as w- we always, we're gonna start with a little bit of housekeeping. Um, I'm putting in the chat the, website for where the recordings are.

It's over at, thehiveapiary.com.

The Hive is an online spirituality and wellness, s-center, if you will, that, I started several years ago.

So you can go over there, get the recordings. They are free.

Lots of free classes over there. And just check us out.

We'd love to, to have more, people join us at any time.

Uh, the ... Last week's class, we're on the hunt for it.

Remember how bad Zoom was acting last week?

We, we don't know where it left its recording.

We got the transcript, but not the recording. So stay tuned.

Uh, hopefully class two will be up, or I will record it all over

again just by my little lonesome. Um, I'll try to do the

parts. I'll just, I'll just give the

information. Um, but we are in the heart of Galatians

now, chapter Let me give a little recap, and then while you all

are getting your Bibles ready, decide amongst yourselves who might like to be our

first reader of the day. Um, Galatians, as just a

reminder, is one of Paul's most certified Paulian

letters. Uh, we know it's his. We just don't necessarily know

when. It was written to, many churches in the, the

area called Gaul, where, they were

experiencing first him as a missionary.

He arrived there and established many churches.

It sounded like it was a very good relationship because they took Paul in when he

was very ill, and he in turn told them the true message, the true

gospel, and they took to it right away.

Then Paul continued with his missionary journey after some time, and it was

then when, what some, some people call the
Judaizers or, you know, the false missionaries came in to
try to preach a gospel, that Paul disagrees with, as
we'll get into today, chapter The idea that they were preaching
was that you had to first, convert to Judaism
before becoming a Christian, and in doing so, following all of the laws of the
covenant, including circumcision as the, the main marker of
following the Abrahamic covenant, which we will get into even
more today. Um, so the first week was spent looking at Paul's
apocalyptic vision, apocalyptic meaning revelation.

The entirety of Paul's rest of his life, including this letter,
has been shaped by that. Um, he considers himself g-
the apostle to the Gentiles, which is really something if you
recall his first, leg of his life where he was
somebody who was a zealot for the law and, was, was actively
persecuting Christians, had his revelation where he
saw Jesus. Jesus gave him the message that he then proclaims for the
rest of his life, doggedly in some cases.

Uh, so the tone of the letter, we will hear more of Paul yelling today,
but don't think of it as just Paul being cranky.

Think of it as Paul saying that everything in our life depends on
us understanding the freedom that we have in Christ.

So he's as passionate as passionate can be.

Not 'cause he's just angry, but because he doesn't want us to just be, like,

slaves anymore to, a theology that teaches

we're only as good as, as the rules we follow and how well we

follow them, right? So before we dive into chapter

any questions or any revelations that you

had yourself? Hopefully not an apocalypse necessarily, but

any sorts of thoughts or questions?

Yes, please, Claire, go right ahead.

Um, just for

geographical,

information, would you spell Gaul?

G-A-U-L.

Okay.

And we ... Yep.

Well, that's, to me from my Latin classes,

that was in France.

Yes, that's right. Yeah. So the, the-

Oh

... the idea is that this is a possibly a large

chunk. The Galatian area is between the Black Sea and the

Mediterranean Sea. Um, and then it starts to spread all the

way up through, like, France and into the British Isles.

This is where we get the Gauls, like, like the Celts.

Yes.

So yes, it is the same root of, of, ethnographic movement.

It's, it's that large, an area.

That's right. It's huge.

So Rome, Rome is in, is part of Gaul?

It depends on how, on who's telling you what Gaul is.

That's part of the problem. We don't actually know exactly what that

territory is, which causes it to be a little bit tricky for dating

this letter as well. But Paul went all over that

kn- known world and that territory, so it really could have been

an, a major territory that, that the, the Galatians

churches as a group would have covered.

And interestingly enough, the letter to the Galatians is,

the only, the only letter of Paul's that is written to a group of

churches instead of to a church. Um, I- you know, like Corinthians

is to a church, Romans is to a church,

letter to, Philippi is to a person, right?

You know, like, so you have the, or the Philippians, pardon me, you know, you have

this idea that Paul typically does this more

individually, but here this was a whole region that he was, was working with, which makes it harder to pin down where we're talking about.

I would like to make a comment. Uh, I'm sorry for butting in, but I can't find my re- action button.

That's okay.

I, I, I have gotten a big clarification from this from our first lesson when I found out that Paul, when he got his vision, he kind of isolated himself from the world for a long, long, long time, and I kind of thought it was just a couple weeks and then he was back in Jerusalem and all that.

And now because he was so working in the desert by himself, I understand the tentmaker part.

I've always wondered when you hear about Paul, he was a Roman citizen, a highly educated man, kind of on the upper levels of society. What was he doing making tents? That's been my question all along, and now I understand and I am very happy.

Oh, I'm so glad. Worth the price of admission right there, right?

That is great, and you also raise, I think, a very interesting part about the c- the nature of Paul's life

after his vision, right? You know, it wasn't just that he was given a new i-
way of understanding the world. He had to then live in the world very differently.
He had to give up all of his friendships and families.

Uh, he had to give up his status as a highly educated, person within
his community, and, you know, missionary
activity doesn't fund itself. You know, like, somehow he had to be able to know
how to fund this-

Mm-hmm

... and keep himself going. Uh, and so his whole life is really
turned upside down. It w- it wasn't uncommon for rabbis in the day to have
a, a trade, but the really higher echelon wouldn't have had
to, and Paul was really primed to be part of, like, the, the elite, and he gave it,
he gave it up. That's how apocalyptic the vision was.

Yeah. Okay, other thoughts or comments?

These have been great so far.

Okay. So as we continue, the other thing I love about
Galatians, and it's one of the things that sometimes people hate about Galatians,
but I love that you can really see the personhood of Paul coming
through here. We'll hear that now as we begin to start with chapter
three. Right out of the gate he doesn't mess around.

But remember how, how for the last two weeks we've been talking about the
personhood of Paul, what he went through, how he was into the

standing of the early Christian church, the tension between

him and Peter and the rest of the, the disciples, right?

And then these, these people who are proclaiming the false gospel

coming along and saying like, "Don't listen to Paul. Who is he anyway?" Right?

Like, so he's a real full human being here trying to

be like, "No, I, I'm, I'm holding true to this message that

Christ gave me," and has to defend himself a little bit.

So when we often hear Paul being like, "I'm a Hebrew amongst Hebrews," we might

think of him as being haughty, but in fact he actually has to defend himself a

little bit, and that wouldn't have been, that would not have been weird in the

Ancient Near East. That, that's something that is, it's like giving your bona

fides. That would've been normal, like in a job interview sort of thing.

Um, okay, enough, enough starting material.

Let's dive into it. Would somebody be so kind as to read,

Galatians -? Verses one

through

nine. Thank you, Anne. Please go

for it. You're muted, if you don't mind taking yourself off mute.

I

did.

Oh, we lost you there, Anne.

There we go.

There it is.

Yeah, sorry. It bounced around. I'm sorry. Okay.

Uh, law or faith. You foolish Galatians!

Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly exhibited as crucified.

The only thing I want to learn from you is this.

Did you receive the Spirit by doing the works of the law or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish?

Having started with the Spirit, are you now ending with the flesh?

Did you experience so much for nothing?

If it really was for nothing, well done.

Does God supply you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by doing the works of the law or by your believing what you heard?

Just as Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, so you see those who believe are the descendants of Abraham. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." For this reason those who believe are blessed with Abraham who believed.

Thank you.

And that's the New Revised Standard edition of the Bible.

Thanks.

Yeah.

I liked, I liked that transition- translation. Thank you very much.

Sure.

All right. Before we, do interpretation, what did you

hear?

Okay. Well, I- I'm happy to dive in. Let's see.

First of all, I, I think you heard some passion. You foolish Galatians!

Like, I- you gotta really r- hear him here, and he ...

You know, this word that he used, "Who has bewitched you?" Um, it's the same

word, I found this a little interesting, the same word in the, in the ancient

language for the evil eye. So he's basically saying, like, "Who

cursed you?" and, "Who gave you the evil eye," you know, that you were supposed

to ward off and be protected from. You know?

So he's talking about this as almost like they've been cursed to

believe this. Why is that important?

Well, I, I think it's important because of how Paul is dealing with the

concept of sin throughout this part of the letter.

For Paul, sin is not just about, our moral

failings. It's not not about that, but that's not, like the main thing that he's

worried about. He sees sin as almost,

as almost so prevalent in the world that it's

like gravity. It's like the, the water we are swimming in, and he describes it as almost, like, not our fault if we sin because how else could we be if we were just living in the world without there being, a chance to be liberated from it or saved from it, like as though it were a curse. He will then go on to talk about sin as almost like an occupying force and, you can hear him do this, he really fleshes it out in Romans as well, where he sees sin as, almost like the, the empire coming in and setting out outposts and, you know, keeping you under the boot from which we need to be liberated from. You'll recall at the very beginning of our class several weeks ago, we, we talked about Galatians being, considered almost like the, the Magna Carta of the Bible, of spiritual interpretation. Here is where Paul is really gonna start to craft that, that for those of us who have been living under the burden of this, this, this thing we call sin, we are now liberated. We hear this a lot in hymnody. Anybody, think of like the Christmas hymn, where it's Joy to the World? Verse two, most Christmas hymns by the way in verses two, get a little weird. Um, if you ever take a look at like most Christmas hymns, the first one's like, "Fa la la, it's great." The second one is

like, "Far as the curse is found." Right?

You know, like it gets really into the weeds of like Jesus being like the savior,

not just the cute little baby. Um, so p- like all of that is very

Paulian understanding. Um, we sometimes ...

W- because we've been, been subject to so much

interpretation that sees sin instead

as, simply a matter of our individual faults,

especially post-Reformation we- we've been s- made

to see it that way, that we are ... We sometimes lose Paul's

emphasis here and think that, salvation as Paul uses

it, is just a matter of one-on-one.

Like we have accepted Christ as our personal savior, so we are

saved. Paul isn't thinking this way.

He is thinking so much more globally.

He wants us to see as, as he's talking about in this, kickoff

verse, that the, the Spirit and those who have seen

miracles working arou- among us, have tasted

already the fruits of what it is to live liberated

from sin. It means we could actually, if we were fully

embodying Christ as he'll tell us to later on in the chapter, we could

live without being sinful. It, i- think of

that.

What a thing he's calling us to, to, to live so much as Christ that we are no longer not just doing bad things, but we don't ...

We're not feeling the weight of the gravitational pull to need to keep living sinfully, which is not just about individuals, but a cosmic, reconciliation back to God.

All of the Earth, all of creation, all the cosmos is freed from this because of the, the cosmic nature of Christ. We'll say more about that as we go, but somebody have a question or I thought I heard somebody. Claire, is that you?

Yeah.

Uh-huh. So that's the Kingdom of God-

That's right

... what he's calling us to?

That's correct. And notice that it's a, it's a here and now thing as much as an eschatological event. It's not ...

Paul is not simply interested in getting to heaven.

Paul is very clear that he wants us to be making heaven here with God on Earth, because that's the endeavor.

He'll get i- more into the weeds with this in Corinthians when he talks about us being ambassadors of reconciliation.

It's a very particular phrase, very Paulian phrase.

And what he means by that is he's appropriating a

word in, in Roman, Roman

culture. Um, an ambassador in Rome would be sent to a

place where basically Rome had conquered, and they would set up a little

mini Rome wherever they went, a little empire of Rome with the road system, with

the law system, with the aqueduct system, with the Pax Romana,

right? As they did that, the ambassador became Rome.

Wherever they went, Rome bec- was there.

Ambassadors of reconciliation then

are traveling in a world that has already been conquered by

Christ in that, the, that sin has been conquered, death has been

conquered. Everywhere we go, both as individuals

and as the church, we are to be establishing these pockets of the

kingdom everywhere, where the law has been set

free, where people are forgiven, where we are able to

help people out. Isn't that a beautiful understanding of it?

It's so different than how we sometimes think about Paul talking about sin, which

can sound judgmental. Rather he's saying, "It's, it's

done." Like, don't, don't ... You know, defy gravity

for those who like pop ... who like, Wicked, right? You know, defy sin.

It's, it's no longer has sway over us. Okay, what else do we hear?

Jo?

Please. Yeah, Dad, go for it.

Really. I, I, Paul always uses,

scripture to, to, explain some of his

deep, deep thoughts and of course we ... Mentions Abraham.

Abraham is the, the epitome of man of faith.

Um, you know, the first Hebrew, the, you know, the, the founder of Judaism if you

will, before the law, before the Torah was actually codified.

So he's saying that if, if, if you are truly the seed of

Abraham, it, it was all on faith.

It was all on faith before the law was given, and that, that's a huge thing Paul

is pointing out here.

It really is. I'm gonna ... Th- let's hold on to that thought because in

the, later in the chapter he's gonna talk about,

Hagar and the law, et cetera, and that's a thread we're gonna pull

throughout the whole thing. So absolutely right, like, like everybody put a pin in

what, what Dad just said. The other thing that I think will be really important as

we go forward is what are we putting our faith in?

We're gonna have that question answered in this k- this, chapter as well.

What else did anybody hear in that opening part?

Okay. Then would somebody please read,

verses through ... Let's take it to

Verses through

Um,

bef- but I wanna respond to your previous question.

Oh, please do.

I'm a little slow on the uptake, sorry.

Not at all.

But the thing that comes through again is that there's nothing we can do

to earn grace.

Okay, so-

It happens

... you are saying the heartbeat of this part for sure.

Like, the idea that anything we did, being the

perfect person, it- none of it ultimately...

I mean, it, it matters 'cause we're trying to establish, like, pl- places that feel

like heaven on Earth. But it doesn't, it doesn't count for us

earning our way into heaven or being saved or-

Yeah

... any, like, it's... This is where at the end of our class today we're gonna,

we're gonna look at how famous theologians have used chapter three, and

I mean, if you don't hear Martin Luther in this already

You know, the idea that we are justified by faith alone,

is so key. So put, like, we're gonna hold those two things together,

the, the history of the Abrahamic line and then the,

justify- justified by faith. You two...

I didn't pay you two to say those, but you've just put two important key things on the, on the chessboard. I'll give you \$ afterwards.

All right, anybody else from that first section before we read on?

Okay. Would somebody please read then, what did I say before?

Verses seven through if somebody would be so kind.

Thank you, Marjorie. Go for it.

So you see, those who believe are the descendants of Abraham, and the scripture foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith declared the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, "All the Gentiles shall be blessed in you." For these reason- for this reason, those who believe are blessed with Abraham, who believed.

For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the things written in the book of the law."

Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the one who is righteous will live by faith, but the law does not rest on faith.

On the contrary, whoever does the works of the law will live by them.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree" in order that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Thank you.

Hmm.

Uh, indeed. This is where Paul gets a, gets very Paul, you know? Like, several run-on sentences with some of the deepest theological thought you ever had, but also, what did you say, Paul?

I, I especially like it when Paul get, gets angry because, in all the places in scripture where he does, he just starts going.

Angry or excited, he just never puts in a period anywhere, so I think this is one of those places. All right, what do you all hear in this?

Well, I find it very confusing, this part about, um...

I mean, it just seems to... It, it's confusing.

I get the basic message that, again, we can't earn grace, but boy, does he do back flips to kind of make that

point, seems to me here.

Not just back flips. You're so right.

He is weaving together scripture after scripture after scripture.

If any of you have an annotated Bible, you will start to see we have

Genesis, another piece from Genesis, Deuteronomy,

Habakkuk, Leviticus, Deuteronomy again.

Like, he's taking and weaving-

Mm-hmm

... these pieces of scriptural history and prophecy

together. What is he doing here? Why would he do this many back flip,

back flip- back flips through the Bible?

One, he's trying to appeal to his audience that

clearly has a Jewish background or at least,

is, being swayed that, that being a

Jewish person first is, is mandated, and so he's trying

to be like, "Look, I know the law inside and out, and I

assume you all, at least if you don't know it yourself, you are- you value

it." So he's using that as a, a very

effective, a rhetorical tool

to say, like, "I know this law, so let me interpret it for you." Because

the way it's being interpreted to the Galatians is like you have to follow

this by the letter of the law. Paul is setting

up ... And this is, goes to what my dad was saying a second ago.

Paul is trying to say it's not the letter of the law.

It's actually never been the letter of the law.

It's the concept of the covenant, and to do this, he starts to weave in the Abrahamic covenant piece.

What does he mean? Why does he wanna highlight this?

Well, as Dad said a second ago, Abraham was the person that,

God established this covenant with first before the rest of the

law. In fact, the, the heartbeat of his relationship with Abraham was

sealed with circumcision, so one of the reasons circumcision

here comes up again and again as an important piece is that, like, that's at least one thing you can point to that's been there since the beginning.

You know, w- no matter what part of the law you look at, that one's been there since practically day one.

But then what Paul does is makes this very interesting rhetorical move to say that it's the justification that came through

Abraham wasn't because of what a great guy Abraham was.

In fact, if you've read the story of Abraham, you know there are times where he was less than a model person of what we might

call stellar, stellar reputation.

Um, I'll just leave you to read Genesis if you've not familiar yourself, familiarized yourself with Abraham.

But what Abraham did have and what, what we celebrate is Abraham's faith because he was willing to follow God that he bare- a God he barely knew into the wilderness to establish God's plan with God.

Um, not always perfectly, but he, it was this, the faith that he had that Paul is proclaiming here What the move then Paul makes, the next piece, which is why this feels like a monkey puzzle, is Paul is trying to tell us that from that particular bit of faith we are now grafted into that same covenant, not because we are of a particular ethnicity, he's gonna hammer that point home soon at the end of chapter not because we're following a certain code of ethics, but because God wants it that way. That's the turn he wants us to make, and that the faith that we're supposed to have is in that, not the faith that we can earn our way there or that because we're born a certain way into a, a certain group of people that we're gonna be, saved. He's then gonna make a third turn in the second part where the faith that we have is actually our faith in Christ's faith, but we're not quite there yet. So Claire, were you about to say something?

I thought I saw your hand. Go for it.

Um,

I, I's, I'm stuck on this big area of

Gaul. How did, how did they hear about

Abraham?

Yeah, great. So w- the, the, the

Jewish faith had been all over the ancient Near

East. Um, and now whether or not it had been into France yet, that's, that's why

we're not sure where this Gaul piece is.

Yeah.

Right? You know, the idea of those who, who, got to Gaul did

migr- or got to France, migrated there from this deeper part of

the continent.

Yeah. I understand the Near East, they would know,

even maybe Turkey might have... But it's

the western part that I, I guess just

migrants that you're saying.

Yep. And there, there were, there were people of the Jewish faith all over that

part of the world. Um, and so they took their-

Mm-hmm

... covenant with them and their stories.

They were a people of stories, so wherever there was a Jewish outpost, in the

diaspora, there were storytellers as well. So yeah.

Okay. Thank you.

Thank you, Claire. Uh, Jim?

Yeah. I need

some explanation of verse I kind of need that unpacked for me.

Great.

"Where Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us-

Mm-hmm

... for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a

tree."

Perfect. I didn't ask Jim to ask this question.

Yeah.

But, everybody put your finger in your Bible and then flip

if you will, to Deuteronomy

Deuteronomy

chapter verse

Would anybody like to read that? That's, again, one last time,

Deuteronomy chapter verse

Actually, start at

I'll do it.

Thanks, Dad.

"And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put

to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall

not remain all night upon the tree.

But you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is accursed by God. You should not defile your land which the Lord your God gives you for your inheritance."

Thank you. So Jim, I think you can start to see where Paul's going here, right? So remember Paul is, is...

D- the Deuteronomy is one of the key books of the ancient, Mosaic law system, right? So in Deuteronomy we have a big chunk of the law, and what we're saying is somebody who is cursed, by that we mean, as Paul...

let's use Paul's version of it, has been so subjugated to the pain of sin that they have become sin themselves.

They, these are the worst kind of criminals.

They would be killed by being hung on a tree.

Later, the Roman Empire would, would n- probably unwittingly take this even further by making crucifixion, the way that they treated their worst criminals, especially those who were, seen as, enemies of the empire, upstarters, rabble-rousers, and they would crucify them and put them on a tree. So what Paul is trying to do here is that Jesus himself, Christ himself, made himself a curse. He put himself into this place where

sin is oppressing all of us, not that Jesus did

terrible crimes, although Rome probably thought he was an upstart, right?

You know, probably thought he was a, a criminal.

And so he was put on the cr- on the tree to show

us how the law, how much freedom we could

actually have from this, that even death itself, the curse, the

weight of the, the curse and then the death that is the byproduct of the

curse is now free in the resurrection.

Isn't this an incredibly sophisticated rhetorical move that Paul is

trying to do here by saying the law itself proves how

Christ has broken free from the law and, and thus doing so

grafted all of us into the deep freedom?

Because where Paul is gonna take us is into baptism where we

are made one with Christ, and so it wasn't just Christ's

liberation on the tree from the law, it was all of ours.

Does that help clarify? Okay, great. I got thumbs up from Jim, so this is good.

Thank you. And I'm glad you highlighted that verse in particular, 'cause it just

shows how brilliantly Paul is making these rhetoric moves.

He's taking the law to show how we are liberated from

it. Yeah. Other thoughts?

Okay.

Let's keep going a little bit with this.

Hopefully it'll, it'll keep becoming more clear, and if not, that's all right.

I mean, Galatians you could spend a lifetime with.

Uh, would somebody please be willing to read, verses,

where did we leave off? Did we leave off at ?

Is that right? Yeah. Okay. If somebody would read through,

uh... Let's take it to,

let's just do a small part. From to

please.

Thank you. Gardell, go right ahead.

"Compare this, brothers, with what happens in ordinary life.

If a will has been drawn up in due form, no one is allowed to

disregard it or add to it."

Now the promises were addressed to Abraham and to his

descendants notice in passing that the scripture does

not use a plural word, word as if there

were several descendants. It uses the singular to his

posterity, which is Christ. But my point is

this, once God has expressed his will in due form

no law that came from four hundred and thirty years

later could cancel that and make the promise

meaningless. If you inherit something as a legal right, it

does not come to you as a result of a promise, and it is

precisely in the form of a promise that God made his gift to Abraham.

Mm-hmm. Anybody, anybody know this right off the bat? Uh, this is a little tricky 'cause un- unless anybody was, a- an expert in ancient Hebre- He- He- Hebrew law anybody here? No? I know. This one...

This is where he's getting into the weeds with what this means.

What does covenant mean? Um, so Paul is trying to bring us back to that Abrahamic promise, but that covenantal promise where it was first made, but then saying that nothing changes that contract. And indeed, a covenant was a very particular type of legal contract in the ancient Near East.

It was always made between a party that had more power and to a lower power, obviously God to us. Can't get more higher power to lower power, and it was a way that the higher power would be able to extend the sorts of rights and, protection and benefits, that, that, that higher power was giving to that covenant, and it would never be, broken.

N- now, you might say, "Well, why would a higher power enter into such a covenant

like that?" Well, in the ancient world, it would be something akin, not quite the same, but akin to, like, the feudal system where, let's say, a, a, a wealthy landowner would, say that, you know, you could live on, on this person's land, but you have to give % of your grain back up, up the food chain, right? The, the amazing thing about the Abrahamic covenant is that, God is making a covenant with us, and there's nothing we're giving in return except the, the, willingness to follow the covenant. Isn't it brilliant? I mean, it's, it's more...

Brilliant isn't the right word. It's almost, extravagant.

You know, when we think of, like, the story of the Prodigal Son, for example, you know, we always say it should actually be called the Prodigal Father 'cause the, the prodigal means, like, exorbitant, right?

Like, and the father just, like, keeps giving and giving and giving.

In this story with God and a- Abraham, the idea here is that God's going to make us God's people forever, and that will never be broken. We also like to think of covenant not just as a legal contract between entities.

You could also think of covenantal relationship as a marriage, in that it would also involve family systems.

Um, so it wasn't just between God and Abraham.

It was going to be between God and Abraham's family

forever. So what Paul is trying to say here is that contract, that promise was never null and void, and the way we enter into it, just like with Abraham, is not because we're going to give God whatever God wants, you know, grain, offering, whatever.

It's because, because God wants it.

Back to no justificat- justification by faith alone, right?

Like, the only reason we are justified to be in this relationship with Jes- Jesus and God is because God has made it so.

Um, and I think the, this, the reason Paul keeps hammering this

home from different angles in, in, around the

Abrahamic covenant and law

is because he does not want us to make the mistake

of thinking that, we have to behave or be

a certain person, a, a perfect person for God to wanna be in a

relationship with us. He is reminding us that it's never been the case, that

there's ever been a perfect person, and he's reminding of,

us of the scandal of all of this. Um, we just talked about the scandal of

the cross, you know, that we would follow S- a, a Messiah that not only died but

died in a scandalous way and hung on the cross.

The scandal of a God that wants to be in an unequal

relationship with us throughout eternity.

No other gods in the na- ancient Near East were ever displayed as acting like this, right?

We sometimes think of the Old Testament God as, like, mean and war-fearing, et cetera. Actually, if you put it in context for the history of the time, that...

Our God looked like he was making all the weakest, weirdest choices, right? Most gods were militaristic, and we have a God who hangs his war bow up, into the sky as a rainbow.

Um, we have a god that... Most of the gods in the, ancient pantheons would demand sacrifices all the time, you know, saying, you know, you, if you don't give enough sacrifice, I'm gonna, you know, take away all of your life. Our God instead says, you know, the sacrificial system is for your benefit, and then we'll actually do away with it completely, towards the end, wi- wi- with Jesus, right?

So we, we have this scandalous God that Paul doesn't want us to lose track of 'cause it's just so mind-blowing. Yeah, Marjorie, please.

The hanging on the tree, the crucifixion, all of that, the language of liberation is

helpful to me because I've always had trouble with the idea that Jesus died for our sins.

Right.

The issue of atonement-

Mm-hmm

... which seems very Old Testament and scapegoating,

meaning you put the sins on one poor goat, and

off into the wilderness goes he. Um, so

it, it, it's very dicey for me to get an understanding

of the power of the crucifixion that isn't about

punishment, vicarious punishment

and liberation from that. So I don't know if that's

something

That now would be good to comment on or whether we just pin that too

Uh, no, we'll comment on it, on it in a mo- in a moment 'cause you're absolutely

right. Like, this is why Paul is so mad here, 'cause he's like, "Why would

you all go back into a system that continues

to be, a quid pro quo?" You know?

Like that it, it's all about atonement in that you have to

... This is all this sort of sacrifice because God's mad at you all the time,

right? W- Paul, Paul's mad at us, but he's trying to be ...

to, to show us that God's not mad at us.

That this-

But then-

Yeah, go ahead

... sorry. Then atonement as a theology was embraced by the

church later on, so that is very confusing to me.

Much later on.

Fair.

We're talking Reformation. Like, that sort of atonement theory that you're pointing to is practically a modern invention in Christian-

Okay

... and Christian thought. And, and you're really wise to lift it up because

Galatians, if it's read simply as a, you

have to choose Christ as your personal savior because otherwise God is gonna send you to hell, it doesn't actually make sense.

Um, like it's, it's a, a reading that I, I think you have to really work

hard to, to come to because then all of a sudden it's another

justifications by works, right? Like, so if you don't accept Jesus

as your personal savior, that's considered a work.

It's something you could do, right?

So you actually can't read Galatians that way because it's ...

Like, the what we have ... What we accept faith in, Paul will make this

point in a moment so I don't wanna get too ahead of ourso- selves, but is the faith

of Jesus' faith, and we put that on in Christ because we've been, we've been

dragged out of this, this, this sinful cosmos.

Yeah. Harriet, wait, did you have your hand up?

I don't wanna miss you.

I think you might be
muted.

Harriet, why don't you work on that, and then I see Gardell's hand, and then I'll
come back to you. Does that sound good? Okay, go for it, Gardell.

Yeah, no, this, vaguely reminds me of w- we used to do tours
regularly at church. I was one of the tour guides.

And a lot of people

were clearly looking for the law, y- y- and to ... Am I ...

Do I wanna be here? You know. And then they were trying to ask
questions, you know, is there the secret code words I need to say, the s-
the things I absolutely have to believe, to

be accepted. And so it's like we're just stuck mentally in this
pattern of, I, I need the new rules 'cause I, I wanna be

able to follow 'em, and this freedom in a sense that this gives us that
there's no charge for admission and they'll always be there
is almost painful for people to accept.

In spite of the fact I'd say we're a Jesus-centered church, look at the stained
glass window, but even that, you know, you can work
your way toward. Then they're really unco- they c- and some people get really
uncomfortable. But it's a great selling point, and it's one of the reasons I'm here
at St. Columbus.

Uh, I'm, I'm so with you, Gardell. It's, it's really true.

We, human beings, we're, we're actually
wired this way in our, in our brain chemistry.

We like things black and white. You know, do this, don't do that.

Like, the law gives us a measure of comfort that Paul is about to admit.

He's gonna ... He's basically gonna be like, "There, there is a, there's a

reason the law was given to you. It's i- and it's mostly for your

comfort." But he's like, "But actually after a while, it's not for your benefit

anymore." Right? It's a, to just be locked into dualistic

thinking. Paul's world had been dualistic

thinking, right? He had been a man devoted to knowing what was right and what was

wrong, not because he was, not smart, but because

he was one of the smartest people there was, and he wanted to make sure he was

doing it right. You know? All things right.

And what he realized is what a trap it was to, to only see

God in the black and white, yes or no.

It's why in a moment he'll remind us that there, there is no,

male or female, or Greek

or slave, right? You know, like there cannot be dualistic thinking

anymore in the body of Christ. We, we're asked to think bigger than that.

So thank you, Gardell. Really important point.

Harriet, n- it looks like you

Yeah, I did. I don't know why I have such problems with Zoom and you

'cause I do Zoom all the time. At any rate, here I am.

We're glad.

I'm confused about Paul's audience because-

Mm

... I was reading this last night and, and I thought his

audience was to non-Jews, and

I was reading this as h- he ... I mean, I got a

little charged up when

he said, y- about this plural, this plural and singular about

offspring. And, but he's saying, "No, no, no,

the offspring are not the Jews, they are Christ,

and therefore you don't have to pay attention to the law," which was a

response to the Jews and their disobedience.

Do you wanna comment on that?

Sure. So you're, you're right that Paul is, Paul is talking to the

Galatians who not everybody there was Jewish first.

In fact, that's kinda the point, right?

Like, so they were very much not Jewish, but the problem is there are people coming

into the community saying, "You have to be Jewish first, and

here's, here's the way that it has to go." So that's why he's trying to

be like, well, if the, if the smartest guy in town is t- it looks like he's telling

you you have to be Jewish first, I'm gonna be smarter than the smartest guy in

town.

Right? So Paul is, very smartly trying to beat them at

their own game for this, for this very mixed,

congregation. There may have even been some people who were Jewish first.

It's just so very mixed. Um, so he-

Right

... yeah, you're right, Harriet. Thank you.

Okay.

And, and what I liked your point too about this offspring being

plural, this is how the church has always

understood herself as being, many members in

one body, right? That we are born into this through-

Mm

... the virtue of our baptism. Um, and Margie, this is to your point

too. The ... Up until the Reformation, the church really took this as a

primal, understanding of, of how this all worked. We

have really great archeological evidence that the earliest church fonts

were, in, in shapes of, like, sarcophagi and

crosses so that you die with Christ.

You know, like, they, they were to be tombs that you died alongside.

And some of them, my favorite, were actually womb-shaped

so that when you went through the baptismal waters, they were the waters of,

of new birth. Um, in fact, they would take the Paschal candle and they would dip it into the waters as though the Paschal candle was the light of Christ impregnating Mother Church.

Like, they, they took this very seriously.

And then in the Middle Ages, you see so many paintings, so many paintings. Once you start seeing them in, in m- museums, you won't be able to unsee this, where the wound of Christ, which of course outflowed water and, and blood, the bat- very much an imagery of what happens in birth itself, right?

The water breaks and there's blood. And as the ...

A- what you see is Christ on the cross with this womb shape, or even vaginal shape of an opening as the birth canal, and there's often people being pulled right out of that womb, vaginal spot so that these are new

Christians being birthed into the world from this liberating moment, right? You know, it's a little graphic, but that's what everybody was back in the day. They w- th- it was never a sanitized faith.

Like, even in our art and our fonts, we were treating this as, as body and blood of Christ, real body and blood.

So good points, everybody. Okay, let's keep going. Ba, ba, ba, ba. We are on verse

Let's take it to the end and see how much we can unpack.

Verse all the way to

please. Would somebody like to do that reading?

All right, Marjorie. Thank you. We got a taker.

I wanted to give someone else a chance. Anybody else interested?

No.

I, I can do it.

Thank you.

I would be happy to.

That would be lovely. Thank you so much.

Why then the law?

It was added because of transgressions

until the offspring would come to whom the promise had

been made, and it was ordained through angels by a

mediator. Now, a mediator involves more

than one party, but God is

one. Is the law then opposed to the

promises of God? Certainly not,

for if a law had been given that could, could

make alive, then righteousness would

indeed come through the law, but the scripture

has imprisoned all things under the power of sin

so that what was promised through the faith of Jesus Christ

might be given to those who believe.

Now, before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed, therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came so that, that we might be reckoned as righteous by faith.

But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is no longer Jew or Greek. There is no longer slave or free. There is no longer male and female, for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. And if you belong to Christ ... And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

Mm. Well-

Mm.

Well read. Thank you. I was feeling that.

Ugh, this is great stuff, right? So look at what Paul has-

This, this is indeed good news.

Amen.

This is very good news.

Amen. It is in ... It is good news. He may be shouting it, but I

wanna shout right back amen.

That is right. This is very good news.

Look at the turns that Paul has made since the beginning of the chapters, right?

First of all, he wanted to give us, an appeal to

experience, like, "Don't go back. You've, you have seen the miracles.

You have felt the joy of being liberated from

being under the boot of the s- of the oppression of sin." Then he

makes this turn to Abraham and the law.

He, he tells us why the law and Abraham were even

there, and in this section, he even goes in e- even further as to why the law.

He says it's not that the law was bad, it's that, like, it's just

incomplete. You know? Like, it's not a bad thing to not murder

somebody. It's not a bad thing to keep the Sabbath.

Like, these laws are good, but think of them more as,

glasses until you get LASIK surgery, right?

You, you need something to be able to see, the way the

world could be, and that's where the law came in, but
now what we're being asked to do is to see the world and
ourselves as being lifted out of sin and that we're
liberated. He goes so far, in verse,
and to talk about this
disciplinarian. Um, that word in the, in
the ancient language is, is the word that was used for a
slave or almost like a nanny that would accompany a young boy
to school and then punish that boy for their bad behavior.

Right? So, like, a very strict nanny disciplinarian who
themselves, notice, are under a law, right?

Like, they were either a slave or a nanny, subjugated, right?

Like, so

what Paul is trying to say here is the law doesn't create more
freedom. It just creates more people who have to follow the
same pur-

Right

... the same way, the same separation, right?

Instead, what he's trying to do is celebrate the wideness
of what it is to be following Christ's faith.

It means to, in our baptisms, we have put on

Christ. Our name tag should no longer say, "Hello, my name is Hillary." It

shou- should say, "Hello, my name is Christ," and that we are all the same. We all have the same name tag.

Um, I'm gonna say another thing in a moment, about the, the faith of Jesus, but Marjorie, you go first. I see you have your hand up.

Well, two things. First of all, I'm struck by the fact that Paul talks about Christ and not Jesus, and I'm always interested in that dichotomy and what it conveys. Um, but the other thing is this strikes me as developmental, except maybe it isn't developmental.

But the idea that you go, you have this sort of discipline until you're able to have the, until you have the capacity to have freedom. But that goes against the idea that it's not

... Uh, I don't think that's accurate, but it still struck me-

You're, you're right on it. So-

... that there's a developmental pers- piece to this.

That's what Paul ... You're right because Paul is trying to say, "Look, if it were about developmental, like if we could, if we could think and act our way to this, he would've."

Or people like him would've. Or eventually in history, somebody would've been so darn good that they could've earned their way into heaven.

What he is trying to say, just like you're saying, is there's literally always the

next step to take if we're just under the burden of the law.

There's li- there's always more money we could give, there's al- always more

time we could give. Um, he's like, "Don't you wanna be free from

that?" He's ... Y- not to, not to appropriate another

religion here, but sometimes I think it's helpful to, to think about,

the theology of karma. Um, karma in the Dharmic

system is when, somebody ... And I'm, I'm simplifying

here, so forgive me. Um, when somebody has

lived a life where, they have done bad things, they

have to be reincarnated to then live out

the repayment of that and still try to live even better the next time.

And so you're stuck in a wheel of Dharma for lifetime after

lifetime after lifetime until you're so good that you can be released

from the wheel of Dharma, which spoiler alert, does not happen very often.

You tend to be, like, made into a god at that point.

Um, and you can descend the, the ladder as well.

You can, you can have lived a life so poorly that you come back reincarnated as a

dung beetle or something like that, right? Like, so you, you, you can see ...

Not that that was ever the law that Paul's talking about.

But you can see how liberating it would be to be freed from a

concept of you get what you deserve in this life and in the

next. Because if we get what we deserve, who amongst

us really deserves heaven?

Right.

Who amongst us really deserves even this life that we're living now, you know? Uh, like, and so what Paul is trying to say is, "Be freed. Be freed from the wheel that crushes you of ever having to do this, quote-unquote, 'right'." I'm gonna take us a little further into this. Yes, please, Anne, go right ahead.

Oh, you're muted, my friend. You're muted.

Anne, I think ... Sorry, I think you're muted.

Okay. Sorry about that.

That's okay.

Um, I was just maybe off the beaten path, but I

was wondering where do The Ten Commandments fit into all this?

Because that's so- one of the supreme laws that we follow

and, I just, you know, it just popped in my head th-

there must be somewhere where that fits in because that, you know, that is a, you

know, major, those are major laws that we try-

They sure are.

... that we try to follow, successfully or not.

They sure are. This is a great example.

So The Ten Commandments are, yes, the cornerstone of

what's known as the Mosaic law, you know, the laws from Moses.

And they are, you might call them the categories by which then they start to build out all of the smaller laws, like that are all related to one of the Ten Commandments. Um, Jesus himself will talk about how important these are because he will talk about the Ten Commandments, and he will whittle them down even further-

Right

... to love God and love neighbor as yourself, right?

Again, it's not that any of these are bad. This is absolutely right.

Jesus is saying, "That's the way to live." Like, if you are going to be Christ to the planet and to the other people, that's how you do it.

It's your rule of life, let's say, right?

The pattern by which you live. But what Jesus and Paul are trying to say is the only way you can do that is because you yourself are liberated, right?

Before you can even try to live-

Absolutely

... these laws, like if, like all the way back to Abraham, it's because God wants you to be able to live these laws, because God is doing it with you, right? The very impulse is the Spirit.

So Anne, to your point, these are good things.

These, this is how we should live. But not at the expense of thinking that we're doing it.

Like, like we're able to do this and we are earning our way.

Does that help, Anne? You, we've lost your video.

Yes.

Okay. Good. Good, good.

Oh, okay. Yes. Thank you.

Ab- absolutely. Let's look again at verse

Um, verse would anybody like to

read it, maybe in a tran- different translation?

Thank you, Nancy. Go right

ahead.

Almost. There we go.

There we go. "But the

scripture has locked up everything under the control of

sin so that what was promised, being given

through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those

who believe."

Thank you. Thank you. There is an alternate

way that this verse is also translated, and some of you may have

it. Um, it's actually a pretty important translation

change. It reads this wayBut the scripture has

imprisoned all things under the power of sin, so that was pro-

what was promised through fai- the faith of Christ

Jesus might be given to those who believe of Christ

Jesus rather than in Christ Jesus

Christ

All of a sudden you got a major theological difference, which is I

think one of the reasons we often like to hear things in other

translations. Um, and it's a choice that, that is ...

One or the other can really, are often chosen by

different biblical commentators. So, but here's how ...

what can happen. If you read it through faith in Christ, it

can sound like it's your faith, like the-

Mm-hmm

... believer's faith, that is necessary to obtain the

promise. But the alternative, faith of Jesus

Christ, emphasizes Jesus's faith as

which grants the promise. See the major difference here, right?

And the, the, the second is where we're going here. Right?

Like Paul trying to remind us that it's not our faith we have

faith in, it's actually Jesus's faith that we have faith in, because Jesus is

the one who has perfect faith, and we're grafted into Him.

Again, the onus is not on us to get this right, thanks be to

God.

Uh-huh.

But we have put on Christ, so we must be there,
fully giving ourselves to that faith of Christ.

I'm gonna pause there for any questions, and then we're gonna just do a quick
little two-minute, walk through some of the history of this interpretation
with some heavy-hitting theologians.

Any other questions or comments?

David, what were you about to say? You look like you were-

I was just gonna say that it's just

I'm about to reach my th birthday, and yet I still
can't get this.

I don't think we're ever supposed to quite-

I've heard it so many times, and I ...

Every time I'm reminded of it, I'm grateful. Thank you.

Thank you, Church. Thank you for remind- It's Jesus' faith, not
mine.

But I always come back around to, you know, how good is David
today?

How good is David today? How good is Hilary today?

We have been raised this in, in this culture.

In fact, I think it's just human behavior, which is why Paul has to yell so
badly. Um, because we, we think that our
agency in all of this, the free will that we have, means that,

means that w- that God looks at us the same way we look at the rest of the world as quid pro quo. You know? Like, like we, we can judge people, but really what we're being is judgmental.

God's judgment is so different. You know?

Like, God, God looks at us and, and first with the emphasis of love and grace. Um, such a powerful difference. Thank you, David. I so, I so agree.

Okay. Chapter Three, as you can imagine since it's such a theological powerhouse of the heartbeat of the letter, has been interpreted by many different theologians over the years.

Martin Luther, as we mentioned at the top of the class, obviously wants us to remember about the doctrine of justification by faith alone and not by works. Um, in his commentary on Galatians, which is a long ...

It's much longer than the actual letter, this is where he really talks about, the promises, made, to set us apart into the, the Abrahamic covenant.

Dietrich Bonhoeffer, famously uses this as his, costly grace versus cheap grace hinging on it, especially verse where we hear,

uh ... Da, da, da. Where are you? "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law.

For the righteous shall live by faith.

But the law is not faith, but rather him who do- him who does them shall live by them." In other words, if we treat this as, oh, the opposite could be true, where, where we just think, oh, I don't have to do anything good because I, you know, I've been justified. Paul wants to, like, say, "Absolutely not." In fact, now you have more responsibility because you're Christ to the world. You know, it's easier living under the law. Like, now you actually have to make your decisions based on your, your relationship with God. Karl Barth as well, he uses, Galatians to talk about how, we are not to, to cheapen grace, and to have a liberal theology. By liberal, he means, just making this about human progress, right? You know, you can see how Paul's putting a brake on that. And then finally, Martin K- Luther King Jr., of course, Galatians "There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave or free," et cetera. You know, obviously the, the, the bedrock of the civil rights movement. So Galatians, we need it. I mean, theologians throughout years have used this as their backbone for their faith. We made it with one minute to spare. We did it. We did it. All right, friends, thank you all. Really en- enjoying this walk through together. Thank you, Jim. Got a thumbs up and a clap. This is great.

Thank you all so much. Have a great rest of the day. God bless.

Great