

Scripture Text

Galatians 3:10-18

Context

Apostle Paul wrote the present letter to the churches of Galatia (1:1; 5:2). He expressed his astonishment on their openness to the judaizers (cf. 1:6) who led people to abide to the law and the works of the flesh as a means of salvation. He defended the doctrine of justification by faith (like in the letters to the Romans) both in its theological (chaps. 3, 4) and practical (chaps. 5, 6) implications. He warned Galatians of the dire consequences of abandoning such essential doctrine.

Big Idea

There are two ways to righteousness – relying on ourselves to keep the law, or relying on God to keep his promise. As God's covenant is kept and fulfilled for us in Christ, we now are able to receive righteousness by faith in him.

Context Question

- What is the difference between faith and works?

Observation and Meaning

Let's read Galatians 3:10-18

- Why are those who try to obtain salvation via works of the law under a curse?
- How can one be free from the curse?

Observation and Meaning

- What does Christ's redeeming work mean for you?
- What does it mean to live by faith? What are some obstacles to living by faith? How can we encourage one another to live by faith?
- What are some ways that you might have fallen into trying to please God or earn his favour by your own efforts? What encouragement does this passage offer you?
- What was the promise God made to Abraham? Why is it significant that the law came 430 years after the promise to Abraham as opposed to before?
- When do you feel tempted to trust your work more than God's promises?
- How can we encourage other Christians to live by faith and not by works?

References

- Stott, John. John Stott Bible Studies: Galatians: Experiencing the Grace of Christ. Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1998.
- Keller, Timothy. Galatians: Gospel Matters. UK: The Good Book Company, 2013.

Guide for Study Leaders

Use the C.O.M.A. (Context, Observation, Meaning, Application) method to work through the biblical text.

Context

Pay attention to the surrounding verses, paragraphs, chapters, events, etc. to see how this passage fits within the context of this particular book of the Bible.

Note how this passage fits within the larger storyline of the whole Bible, i.e. how God is saving a people through Jesus Christ to live under his rule in his place.

Observation & Meaning

Make careful observations of the biblical text. Notice details such as linking words (eg. "for", "if", "therefore"), repetition, dialogue, narrative, OT quotations, etc.

To understand the meaning of the biblical text, we need to discern the author's purpose or intent: Why is the biblical author writing this?

Helpful questions to ask include:

Who is writing and to whom?

What is the situation of the author and of the readers?

Are we made aware of any problems that need to be addressed?

Are there any repeated themes, or a single idea that holds everything together?

Application

Apply God's word to the heart. Move beyond merely addressing circumstances and behaviour by asking good "heart" questions. For example: Why do we do what we do? What do we really desire?

Always connect the gospel to application. For example, what difference does knowing Christ make to our obedience to God?

Ask what the passage teaches us about God, ourselves, salvation in Christ, the church, the world, etc.