

May 14, 2017

Saved by Grace Transformed by Spirit

"Is the Law, therefore, opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner to sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe. Before this faith came, we were held prisoners by the law, locked up until faith should be revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith."

Galatians 3:21-25

God gave the Old Law to Moses on Mount Siani, taking forty days to complete the task. That law was designed to guide the people of Israel as they became his nation. But the Law was also designed to demonstrate a human reality. Not one of us, save for Jesus Christ alone, has ever been capable of keeping any law perfectly. Without exception each and every one of us breaks at least on command every day. Without the grace of God poured out in Jesus Christ you and I would have no hope. All of us without exception would face condemnation and the coming wrath of God.

Thanks to God's great love for us that does not have to be our future. We do not have to face God's wrath and the certain condemnation that we all deserve under the *"Law of Sin and Death"*. Instead we can become God's children. The Apostle would tell us, *"You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus, for all of you who were baptised into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are one in Christ Jesus."* (Galatians 3:26-29)



We are saved by faith, but faith is not just a simple belief. I may believe that Abraham Lincoln liked to wear stovepipe hats. As a belief it has absolutely no lasting effect on my life. I am not different because I believe that statement. I may believe that seatbelts save lives. Again, this belief may or may not have any direct influence on my life. But, if I buckle up every time I get into the car to go some place, then I have placed my faith in the belief that seatbelts save lives.

True faith isn't just a simple belief, but it is a choice to believe a truth that changes how we behave and ultimately, who we are. So it is with our faith in Jesus Christ. Yes, we are saved by our belief in Jesus, by our faith, but for that faith to be real it must be life changing. Just as Jesus would teach, *"If anyone would come after me, he must deny himself and take up his cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for me will find it."* (Matthew 16:24-25)

If I believe that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross to pay the penalty for my sin, and if I believe that he was raised from the dead becoming the source of God's grace for me, then that belief will be reflected, Jesus says, in my willingness to give up control of my life to him.

As Paul would write in this letter, *"I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me."* (Galatians 2:20-21) My faith led me to lay down my life for

Jesus, to follow him to the cross and then to the grave. I no longer live, my old life has been buried with him in baptism, and now he lives in me.

My faith led me to respond to what God has done for me in Jesus Christ, by changing the way I live day by day. True belief is always life changing. It has to be life changing or is it nothing. Is your faith in Jesus life changing? Is it true faith?