

Lesson 6 Galatians 4:21-5:6
Paul's earnest petition for the truth of Christ Alone

1. How the Galatians were led astray

2. Paul's case for Christ established throughout history.

-Sarah and Hagar

-Exiled Jews in Babylon

"After God gave the promise to Abraham, He gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The law exposed sin, provoked sin, condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man's respectability and disclose what he is really underneath – sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself.

And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft pedal sin and judgment. . . We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history . . . No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of night sky that the stars begin to appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth."

-John Stott, *The Message of Galatians*

"Originally this prophetic word was for the Jewish Exiles in Babylon, around 1200 years after Abraham's time and 600 years before Paul's. The remaining Israelites thought their national life was over, that they would never return home, or have their own country again. They seemed like failures, weak and helpless (their exile was a punishment), while other nations seemed strong and able. But God says to them, through Isaiah: Now that you are helpless, you will see that it is the weak in whose lives my grace works! The strong are too busy relying on themselves. I will make you numerous and great.

The prophecy of Isaiah looks back to Genesis 16, in which God looks down on two women, one beautiful and fertile, the other barren and old, and He chooses to save the world through the barren one. And through her family would come another unlikely son, born to another woman who could have no expectation of being pregnant, not because she was barren but because she was a virgin. And through that Son, all the peoples of the world would be blessed, just as God promised Abraham and Sarah. That is how God's grace works. Now Paul takes up the same story that Isaiah used, and gives it an even more full and wonderful application. The Galatians are being "beaten up", spiritually speaking, by the false teachers. They are being told that they are too polluted and flawed simply to consider themselves loved children of God the moment they believe. But now Paul turns the tables and comforts the Galatians powerfully. They are the "barren woman.: If salvation is by works, then only the "fertile" can have "children". Only the morally able and strong, the people from good families, the folk with good records can be spiritually fruitful, enjoy the love and joy of God and transform the lives of others.

But if the gospel is true, it does not matter who you are or who you were. You may be a spiritual and moral outcast, as marginal as the single, barren woman was in those ancient days. It does not matter. You will bear fruit, the kind that lasts. The gospel says: Grace is not just for fertile Hagers, but for barren Sarahs. If Sarah can have a future, anyone can! In fact, it goes deeper even than this because Paul is saying that the gospel of grace is especially for the barren. The able and the “fertile” think they can attain without God, and so they reject the gospel of grace... The gospel shows us that it is the strong, moral, good, religious, and self-righteous who, in the end, are the slaves.”

-Timothy Keller, *Galatians for You*

3. Freedom found in Christ and the hope of Righteousness

-Wait and Rest in the sufficiency of Christ

-How this impacts our daily walk

Romans 4:18-25 “In hope he (Abraham) believed against hope, that he should become the father of many nations, as he had been told, “So shall your offspring be.” He did not weaken in faith when he considered his own body, which was as good as dead (since he was about a hundred years old), or when he considered the barrenness of Sarah’s womb. No unbelief made him waver concerning the promise of God, but he grew strong in his faith as he gave glory to God, fully convinced that God was able to do what he had promised. That is why his faith was “counted to him as righteousness.” But the words “it was counted to him” were not written for his sake alone, but for ours also. It will be counted to us who believe in him who raised from the dead Jesus our Lord who was delivered up for our trespasses and raised for our justification.”