



Sermon Notes from 16 June

What Truly Counts (*Galatians 3*)

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Similar to how the world believes in obtaining their standing in the community, many Christians believe in earning their standing with God through their own effort. If we do life not believing Jesus is enough, we become believers of a false gospel which nullifies the saving grace of Christ.

We are counted righteous through:

1. Hearing with faith

v1a-2 Paul rebukes in utter bewilderment and draws attention to 2 incompatible choices: By “works of the law” (not saved) or by “hearing with faith”(saved). This is the acid test that determines whether one is saved by the gospel or not.

v3 A walk that began by the Spirit had switched to relying on self-effort for growth. We too are susceptible to the same error for we are so ingrained with the idea that we get what we work for. This is foolishness. We are counted righteous by faith in Christ alone. If we could earn our salvation, then Christ died for nothing!

The gospel that saves us is also the gospel that grows us. We are set free from our addiction to self-effort. We are counted righteous and accepted through faith in Christ Jesus. We do not earn our acceptance through what we do. We have peace of mind in the face of failures. We can live without a constant sense of inadequacy, or fear being a disappointment or being judged by others.

2. Believing God

v6 (Gen 12:1-3; 15:5-6) Paul shows the Judaizers through the Old Testament that Abraham was counted righteous by faith,

not by works. Because of his faith, he was credited with God’s righteousness which changed his legal status in the court of heaven from a condemned sinner to one who has received full pardon.

Unlike human righteousness which is socially achievable, the righteousness of God is a gift that has the power to forgive sins. Those who are of faith are blessed (v9). But those who rely on self-effort are under a curse! (v10). This includes looking down on self when failing to meet one’s self-imposed standard of righteousness, or looking down on others who are not as good, will turn the blessing into a curse.

3. Promises of God

v15 The law of God was enacted not to do away with the promise but to complement the promise.

The law is about what we must do. But the promise is about what God will do - what He will do for Abraham and his offspring. It is a gift; not a wage to be earned. We are counted righteous based on our faith in Jesus. It is a promised gift delivered to us, the children of Abraham.

v19a The law exposes our sins, provokes our sinful nature and increases our sin. We are utterly incapable of meeting its demand.

V13 *Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.*

To the extent that you believe this good news, you will experience a new-found freedom. Yours it will be while you delight in obeying the law and face the endless to do list for it has become your means of worship rather than slavery of acceptance.