



river west church

The Gospel Way: Living by Faith in Christ

Galatians 3

Pastor Guy Gray

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The Only Way Forward

Last week we saw that the theme of “justification” is one of the key themes of the message of the Gospel. When God declares that we are “justified”, He literally declares that we are “not guilty”, even though He knows that we have sinned, and we know it too. He literally declares that we are fully righteous in His sight, even though, in and of ourselves there is no way we could be seen as fully righteous. This is the miracle of the Gospel. Christ paid the penalty for our sins on the cross as our substitute. That’s why God is able to be “just” and at the same time “justify” those who believe in Christ.

We also learn that justification isn’t just a truth to get us started in the Christian faith, it goes beyond that. We don’t start with justification through faith, and then, having been justified by faith, move on to live out our Christian life based on our own efforts or our own works. No! Faith in Christ is the only way forward in the Christian life, no matter how long you have been a Christian. Paul asks the Galatians, “Having begun in the Spirit, are you now going to be perfected, or completed, in the flesh?” (Galatians 3:3). He points out to them that when they began “in the Spirit”, it was all through faith, and not through their own self effort or works. Likewise, in order to move forward in the Christian life, it has to be through faith, and not through a reliance on self effort or works.

This is the same issue many people wrestle with today. They think that faith in Christ is only for forgiveness of sins. They think that if they want to grow and make progress in the Christian life, they are going to do it through their own striving and their own efforts. They also think their efforts are going to determine where they stand in the eyes of God in the end. But this is a distortion of the Gospel. The truth is that our standing in the eyes of God will always be a result of God’s grace and our faith response, not our works. And when it comes to our progress in the Christian life, it is also a matter of our real, daily trust in Christ alone. Not our works!

So what then does it mean to live by faith in Christ? Galatians guides us in this. Let’s look at three aspects of living by faith in Christ. Use the space below to write down what God is speaking to you through His word.

Living by Faith in Christ: The Cross of Christ (Galatians 2:21; 3:1; 3:13)

Living by Faith in Christ: The Spirit of Christ (Galatians 3:2-5; 3:14)

Living by Faith in Christ: Your Union with Christ (Galatians 2:20; 3:26-29)