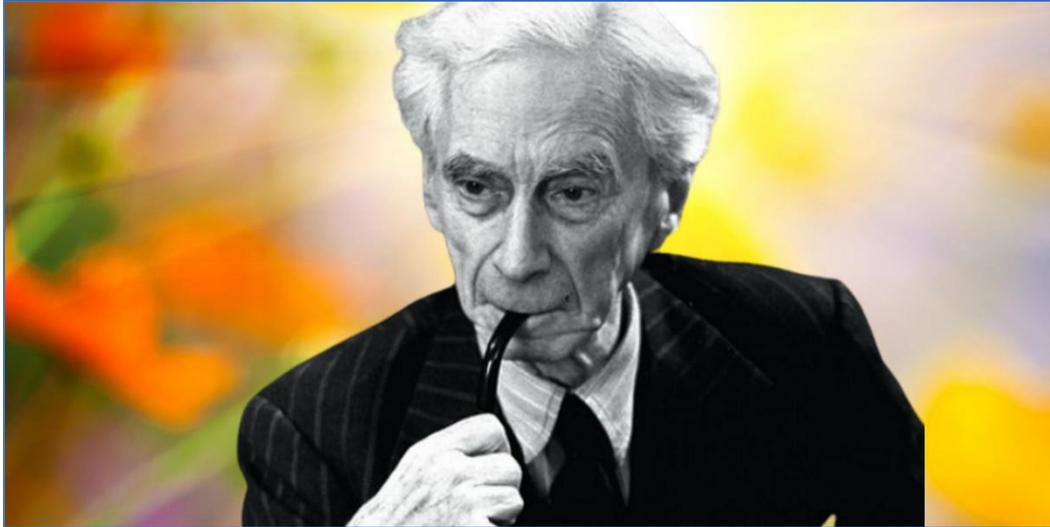


EXPERIENCING GOD'S GRACE

Part 5: How Does One Become Righteous?

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Bertrand Russell, a Welsh philosopher, historian, logician, and mathematician, states "*Where there is evidence, no one speaks of faith. We do not speak of faith that two and two are four or that the earth is round. We only speak of faith when we wish to substitute emotion for evidence.*"¹

How would you reply to someone like Bertrand Russell who holds this view of faith?

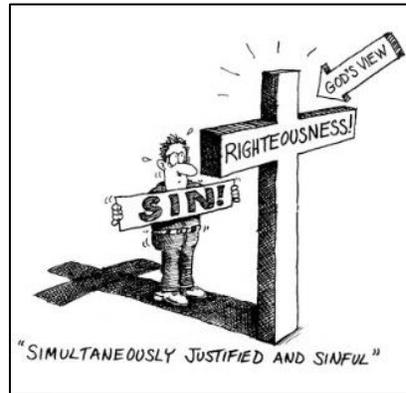
¹ Good Reads, https://www.goodreads.com/author/show/17854.Bertrand_Russell. Accessed July 7, 2022.

I. GALATIANS 3:1-29 NIV

A. You are saved by faith, not by works of the Mosaic Law (3:1-9)

"You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain-- if it really was in vain?

⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." ⁷ Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. ⁸ Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." ⁹ So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith."



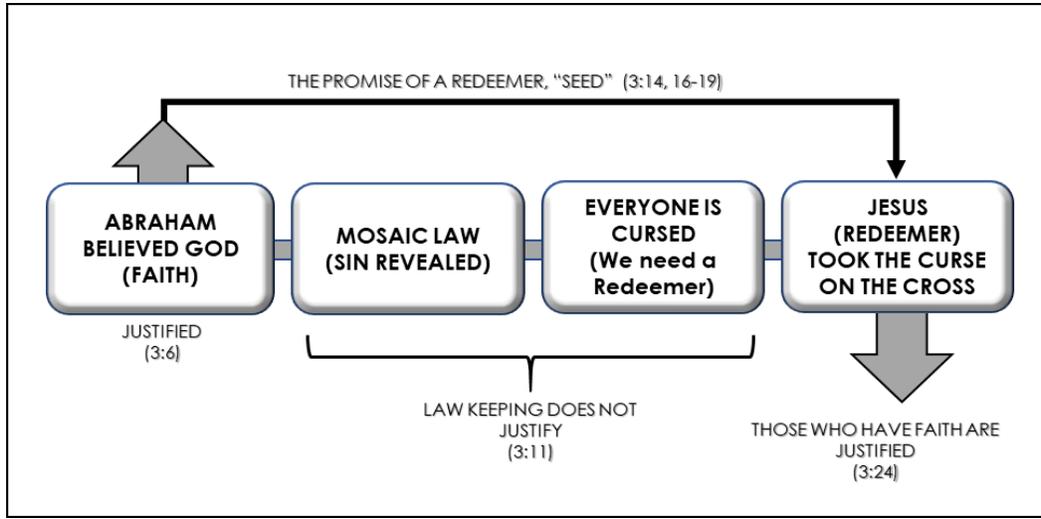
B. The Righteous Live by Faith (3:10-14)

"For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." ¹¹Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." ¹² The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." ¹⁴He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit."

C. The Purpose of the Mosaic law (3:15-22)

"Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been duly established, so it is in this case ¹⁶ The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say "and to seeds," meaning many people, but "and to your seed," meaning one person, who is Christ. ¹⁷What I mean is this: The law, introduced 430 years later, does not set aside the covenant previously established by God and thus do away with the promise.¹⁸For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

¹⁹Why, then, was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. ²⁰A mediator, however, implies more than one party; but God is one. ²¹Is 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. ²²But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe."



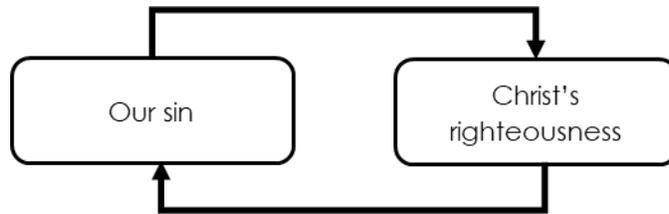
D. Before Faith Came (3:23-29)

"Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. ²⁴ So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. ²⁵ Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. ²⁶ So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, ²⁷ for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. ²⁸ There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. ²⁹ If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise."

II. COMMENTS

The Galatian Christians were "buying into" the teachings of the Judaizers who were telling them that man gains a right standing before God by keeping the law (works.) Paul now corrects this teaching by explaining that man cannot gain a right standing before God by keeping the law. Man can only be right before God by being justified (3:24).

Definition: Justification is an instantaneous legal act of God in which he (1) thinks of our sins as forgiven and Christ's righteousness as belonging to us (2 Cor. 5:21), and (2) declares us to be righteous in his sight.²



III. DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Read Galatians 3:1-9. What words and phrases reveal Paul's attitudes toward the Galatians? Would you consider his attitude toward them as being too harsh? Explain why or why not.
2. Twice Paul calls the Galatian Christians "foolish" (3:1, 3). In what senses is it foolish to add works to the gospel of Christ?
3. After beginning our Christian lives by faith, most of us at one time or other imitate the Galatians and fall into relying on our own efforts. Why do you think this happens?
4. To the Judaizers who were misleading the Galatian Christians, Abraham was a hero and patriarch. How does Paul turn the tables and use Abraham as an

² (Grudem, 1994, 2000, p. 1246)

example of faith instead of law-keeping?

5. What do we as Christians have in common with Abraham?

6. In your own experience, what does it mean to "live by faith"?

7. How can Christians today guard against their own attempts to be self-righteous?

8. Leader's questions (optional).

IV. APPLICATION: FIVE PRINCIPLES OF JUSTIFICATION

A. Principle No. 1: Man cannot gain a right standing before God through

_____.

"Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law" (Gal. 3:11a ESV)

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast." (Eph. 2:8-9 ESV)

"Justification comes to us entirely by God's grace, not on account of any merit in ourselves" (Eph. 2:8-9; Rom. 3:22-24)

B. Principle No. 2: God can declare you to be righteous because he imputes³ (credits) _____.

"What does Scripture say? 'Abraham believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.'" (Rom. 4:3 NIV)

C. Principle No. 3: It is by God's _____ that the sinner is justified.

"For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God," (Eph. 2:8 ESV)

D. Principle No. 4: God justifies you through _____

"Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith." (Gal. 3:11b ESV)

E. Principle No. 5: Justification is a _____ by God.

An example of this is an official pronouncing a man and a woman legally married. Another example is like an Olympic official who declares the games officially open, "I now declare these games open."



"You will keep in perfect peace all who trust in you, all whose thoughts are fixed on you!" (Isa. 26:3 NLT)

³ Imputes (credits; Grk. *logizomai*) means God thinks of Christ's righteousness as belonging to the believer (Romans 4:3; 1 Corinthians 1:30; Philippians 3:9; Romans 4:6-8).

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