

- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 7)**
Rocklyn Clarke Sr. - Sunday June 23, 2013
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<http://www.LifeChurchBoston.org/>
- **The Gospel - Accept No Substitutes (Part 7)**
 - **Preparation**
 - **Introduction**
 - Welcome to another church meeting at the Hampton Inn & Suites.
 - Welcome Cards -
 - “I want to call your attention to the Welcome Card that you were given on your way into the auditorium”
 - These cards do two things for us:
 - They help us get to know our new visitors better.
 - They also give anyone (visitors or members) a chance to express a need or to give us feedback.
 - By filling it out you will help us to better serve you.
 - We're going to provide time for you to complete the cards at the end of our service, but we encourage you to start filling them out now.
 - **Please use this card:**
 - if you're a **first time visitor** or if you've **never** filled one out before,
 - to tell us about a **decision you made** today,
 - to ask us for more information, or to give us **feedback**.
 - **Please include your contact information** unless we already have it. At the **end of service** we'll ask you to complete the card and then place it in the designated box or give it to someone from our staff on your way out.
 - Regularly Invite People To Join Life Church
- Transition
- Review what it means to be a Christian.
 - What does it mean to be a Christian?
 - "Christ" = "anointed one" - effectively "king".
 - The Disciples were first called "Christians" at Antioch - Acts 11:19-26
Now those who had been scattered by the persecution in connection with Stephen traveled as far as Phoenicia, Cyprus and Antioch, telling the message only to Jews. Some of them, however, men from Cyprus and Cyrene, went to

Antioch and began to speak to Greeks also, telling them the good news about the Lord Jesus. The Lord's hand was with them, and a great number of people believed and turned to the Lord.

News of this reached the ears of the church at Jerusalem, and they sent Barnabas to Antioch. When he arrived and saw the evidence of the grace of God, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts. He was a good man, full of the Holy Spirit and faith, and a great number of people were brought to the Lord.

Then Barnabas went to Tarsus to look for Saul, and when he found him, he brought him to Antioch. So for a whole year Barnabas and Saul met with the church and taught great numbers of people. **The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch.**

- "Christian" = "belonging to Christ".
- Christians follow Jesus
 - Jesus' people know his voice and follow him - John 10:22-30

Then came the Feast of Dedication at Jerusalem. It was winter, and Jesus was in the temple area walking in Solomon's Colonnade. The Jews gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Christ, tell us plainly."

Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The miracles I do in my Father's name speak for me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one can snatch them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than all; no one can snatch them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one."
 - Remind them of how we illustrated "following" with "Simon Says".
- As followers of Jesus, we gather on Sundays (The Lord's Day) to celebrate him.
- Review two-stage process of divine revelation.
 - Think about two-stage journeys:
 - Fly to Florida to take a cruise.
 - Taxi to airport to catch a flight.
 - Jesus' contemporaries were flying from LaGuardia.
 - We're flying from Logan.
 - The words "Father", "Kingdom", "good news", etc. are the first leg of the journey. We then use stories to take us to a more complete understanding.
 - Other people's stories will control you unless you establish the story that God wants you to tell.
- **Read The Passage - Galatians 3:15-25**

Brothers, 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. The

promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. What 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. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

What, then, was the purpose of the law? It was added because of transgressions until the Seed to whom the promise referred had come. The law was put into effect through angels by a mediator. A mediator, however, does not represent just one party; but God is one.

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 the Scripture declares that the whole world is a prisoner of 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. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

- **Exegetical Idea**

The Law was provided to lead Israel to Christ so that the blessing promised to Abraham might come to the Gentiles.

- **Formulate the Homiletical Idea:**

The law supervised Israel until Christ came fulfill God's promise to justify the nations.

- **Purpose of the Sermon (what listeners should do)**

- Understand the promise.
- Understand how the law leads us to Christ.
- Find our identity as God's people in Jesus and no one or nothing else.

- **Understand the promise.**

- Christ redeemed us from the law's curse so that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles. - **Galatians 3:1-14**
- "All nations will be blessed through you" - **Genesis 12:1-7**
- God is redeeming the world starting with Abraham.
- God is repairing the human race from the inside.
- God's plan involves the creation of a family through Abraham.

- **Understand how the law led Israel to Christ.**

- The law does not set aside God's earlier promise to Abraham.
- The law demonstrated that Israel was itself trapped by sin and in need of the righteousness that only God can provide.

- Abraham's descendants, the line through whom the nations will be blessed, were themselves part of the problem!
 - Illustration: My "investigation" of Danny.
- Since this righteousness comes by faith, we who now believe are no longer under the law's supervision.
- **Find our identity as God's people in Jesus and not in anyone or anything else.**
 - Our identity is in Jesus!
 - Jesus considers those who do his Father's will to be his family. - **Mark 3:20-35**
 - Our identity is not in "church", religion, "being spiritual", "being a person of faith", etc.
 - Our identity is not in good citizenship or in being good people.
 - The people who find themselves believing in Jesus after hearing his message are the ones who are the people of God.
- **Discussion Questions**
 - What did God promise Abraham? How does this promise relate to your life?
 - Israel constantly fell short of the law that God gave them. What about you?
 - What do you do when you fall short? Is there any hope? Why or why not?
 - Are you a follower of Jesus? If so, who else in your life knows and how did you explain it to them? Who doesn't know?
 - Based on your interactions with them, what do the people who know you think the "good news" is?
- **Conclusion**
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- **Altar Call / Welcome Cards / Communion ?**

- **Welcome Cards - refer to script**
- **We're almost ready to close this portion of our service, but first we want to give you a chance to respond to what you've heard.**
- **Earlier in the service we mentioned the welcome cards and we encouraged you to begin filling them out.**
- **Right now we want you to complete your welcome card. We especially want you to use this card if:**
 - if you're a first time visitor
 - if you've never filled one out before,
 - if you want to tell us about a decision you made today,
 - if you want to ask us for more information, or to give us feedback.
- **Please be sure to include your up to date contact information unless we already have it.**
- **MC & Worship Team continue with tithes, offerings, and worship**
- **Benediction - Numbers 6:24-26**

““The LORD bless you and keep you; the LORD make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you; the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.””
- **Men's Prayer**

- **Scriptures / Life Group Material For 6/23/2013 Life Church Sermon**

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Mark 1:14-15

After John was put in prison, Jesus went into Galilee, proclaiming the good news of God. “The time has come,” he said. “The kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the good news!”

Galatians 3:1-14

You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: **Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard? Are you so foolish? After beginning with the Spirit, are you now trying to attain your goal by human effort? Have you suffered so much for nothing — if it really was for nothing? Does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you because you observe the law, or because you believe what you heard?**

Consider Abraham: “He believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.” Understand, then, that those who believe are children of Abraham. The 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.” So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no one is justified before God by the law, because, “The righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, “The man who does these things will live by them.” Christ 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 tree.” He 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.

Galatians 3:15-25

Brothers, 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. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. The Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ. What 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. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on a promise; but God in his grace gave it to Abraham through a promise.

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revealed. So the law was put in charge to lead us to Christ that we might be justified by faith. Now that faith has come, we are no longer under the supervision of the law.

Genesis 15:1-6

After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: “Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward.”

But Abram said, “O Sovereign LORD, what can you give me since I remain childless and the one who will inherit my estate is Eliezer of Damascus?” And Abram said, “You have given me no children; so a servant in my household will be my heir.”

Then the word of the LORD came to him: “This man will not be your heir, but a son coming from your own body will be your heir.” **He took him outside and said, “Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them.” Then he said to him, “So shall your offspring be.”**

Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.

Genesis 12:1-7

The LORD had said to Abram, “Leave your country, your people and your father’s household and go to the land I will show you. “I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; **and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you.**”

Mark 3:20-35

Then Jesus entered a house, and again a crowd gathered, so that he and his disciples were not even able to eat. When his family heard about this, they went to take charge of him, for they said, “He is out of his mind.”

And the teachers of the law who came down from Jerusalem said, “He is possessed by Beelzebub! By the prince of demons he is driving out demons.”

So Jesus called them and spoke to them in parables: “How can Satan drive out Satan? If a kingdom is divided against itself, that kingdom cannot stand. If a house is divided against itself, that house cannot stand. And if Satan opposes himself and is divided, he cannot stand; his end has come. In fact, no one can enter a strong man’s house and carry off his possessions unless he first ties up the strong man. Then he can rob his house. I tell you the truth, all the sins and blasphemies of men will be forgiven them. But whoever blasphemes against the Holy Spirit will never be forgiven; he is guilty of an eternal sin.”

He said this because they were saying, “He has an evil spirit.”

Then Jesus’ mother and brothers arrived. Standing outside, they sent someone in to call him. A crowd was sitting around him, and they told him, “Your mother and brothers are outside looking for you.”

“Who are my mother and my brothers?” he asked.

Then he looked at those seated in a circle around him and said, “Here are my mother and my brothers! Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.”

Discussion Questions

- What did God promise Abraham? How does this promise relate to your life?
- Israel constantly fell short of the law that God gave them. What about you?
- What do you do when you fall short? Is there any hope? Why or why not?

- Are you a follower of Jesus? If so, who else in your life knows and how did you explain it to them? Who doesn't know?
- Based on your interactions with them, what do the people who know you think the "good news" is?

Life Church Mission Statement

Our mission is to teach people:

to enjoy knowing Jesus without fear, inadequacy, guilt, or shame,
to follow him together as his family,
to function together as his body,
and to work together to expand his kingdom.

Understanding The Bible

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Here, for your convenience, are the Bible passages for today's sermon at Life Church. We use mostly the New International Version (NIV) of the Bible so that you can read it in modern English. You may have been accustomed to reading or hearing the King James Version of the Bible, which uses older English (with words like "thee" , "thou", "thine", "believeth", etc.). Don't be alarmed - the passages are really from the Bible!

The Bible was originally written in three ancient languages: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. None of the people in the Bible, and none of the people who God used to write it spoke English. In fact, English did not even exist as a language when the Bible was written. The King James Version, first published in 1611, was a translation of the Bible from it's original languages into the every day English that people used back then - almost 400 years ago! They didn't just speak that way in church - they spoke that way with everyone. The King James Version was "modernized" in 1769, but, even so, English has certainly changed a lot since then! **We believe that if you're reading an English translation of the Bible it ought to be up to date - written in the English you speak every day. God wants you to understand his Word so that you can put it into practice!**