



Scotts Hill Baptist Church

LIVING IN FREEDOM • IT DOESN'T GET ANY BETTER THAN THIS • GALATIANS 3:23 - 29 •

MAIN POINT

Through faith in Christ, believers are united, justified, adopted, and heirs of God's fulfilled covenant promises.

INTRODUCTION

As your group time begins, use this section to introduce the topic of discussion.

What influences your perception of yourself and those around you? What things shape your identity? Why did you identify these things?

If you had to tell someone the three most important things about you, what would you say?

It is easy to let the world around us define who we are. Culture inundates us at every turn with ideas about who we are and who we should be. However, as Christians there is one basic reality that defines who we are: we are known by God. When God looks at you, He sees His child—one who has been adopted into His own family. All believers have been forever changed by the presence of the Holy Spirit in them. The ministry of the Holy Spirit radically changes our core reality and allows us to see ourselves the way God sees us.

UNDERSTANDING

Unpack the biblical text to discover what the Scripture says or means about a particular topic.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ ROMANS 3:21-26.

Who does God offer the righteousness of Christ to (vv.22-23)?

What does it mean to “fall short of the glory of God”?

Who has fallen short of the glory of God? How should this knowledge influence the way we view ourselves? The way we view others?

The gospel is the great equalizer of persons. No one is righteous, no one does good. All people of all cultures and socioeconomic standings have fallen short of God’s glory and cannot work their way back into a right relationship with Him. Yet God freely offers the righteousness of His Son to all people of who believe, without any distinction.

What motivated God to declare us righteous in His sight?

“Justify” is a legal term meaning God declares the sinner not guilty. How should knowing that we have been justified by grace shape the way we think about and interact with people of different ethnicities or cultures than our own?

God accomplished our salvation by sending His Son to be the “propitiation” for our sins. The word “propitiation” means “wrath-bearing sacrifice.” This was how God could be both just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Christ—God satisfied His justice and declared us righteous in His sight by sending His Son to take the punishment for our sins. Paul could not be more clear—God offers to justify sinners freely by His grace. In other words, God was motivated by love (see Romans 5:8). Knowing that God justified us by grace should motivate us to graciously love the people around us, particularly those are very different than us.

| HAVE A VOLUNTEER READ GALATIANS 3:27-29.

What sorts of things tend to divide the groups of people Paul mentions in verse 28?

How, according to Paul, does the gospel change our perspective on those things which divide us?

As we grow to understand our union with Christ, the barriers we set up between ourselves and people of other ethnicities or cultures fall away. We are “all one in Christ Jesus.” Only the gospel of Jesus Christ brings true unity.

APPLICATION

Help your group identify how the truths from the Scripture passage apply directly to their lives.

How can we practically live out the freedom of being “sons of God, through faith in Christ Jesus” (v. 26) without turning that freedom into license or self-reliance?

What does it mean for us to live daily as those who have “put on Christ” (v. 27)?

How should the truth that “there is neither Jew nor Greek... for you are all one in Christ Jesus” (v. 28) affect how we view and treat fellow believers in the church?

PRAYER

Praise God that because we have been adopted, we live with a new identity before God, we have a new freedom in Christ and are part of a new family by grace.

COMMENTARY

| GALATIANS 3:26-29

3:26. Verse 26 is the key to understanding this passage. Paul countered the divisive teaching promoted by the Judaizers by declaring that “all” the Galatian believers, Jews and Gentiles alike, had received the promise as evidenced by their relationship with God through Christ. That relationship came, not through keeping the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. Therefore, they were “sons of God.” They had entered full adult sonship. The services of a pedagogue to guide them were no longer required. They could enjoy the privileges and freedom of their sonship.

3:27. Not only are those who have faith in Christ Jesus “Abraham’s sons” (v. 7), but they are also adopted sons of God (4:5-7; Rom. 8:14-17). Paul used the image of a person emerging from the water after being baptized to put on new clothes. On baptized into Christ, see Rm 6:3-4. On put on Christ, see Eph 4:20-24; Col 3:9-10.

3:28. The equality and unity spoken of here is of a spiritual nature—in Christ. Paul had just discussed at length that the Jew has no spiritual advantage over the Greek (Gentile), and now he says the same equality is true for social and gender distinctions. No one people group or gender is to be exalted above others.

3:29 To be Abraham’s seed is the same thing as being his “sons” (v. 7), but now the additional element of being heirs is introduced, previewing 4:7 (Rm 8:15-17).