

1. Faith

- a. If the righteous live by faith, we really must define faith.
- b. It is much more than believing in Jesus as God's Son and the world's Savior.
 - i. Hebrews 11:1: "Now faith is the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things not seen."
 - ii. The writer goes on to show us everything the "heroes of faith" did in obedience to their faith.
- c. Paul opens and closes his most theological book, discussing the characteristics of faith.
 - i. Romans 1:1–6: "Paul, a servant of Christ Jesus, called to be an apostle, set apart for the gospel of God, which he promised beforehand through his prophets in the holy Scriptures, concerning his Son, who was descended from David according to the flesh and was declared to be the Son of God in power according to the Spirit of holiness by his resurrection from the dead, Jesus Christ our Lord, through whom we have received grace and apostleship to bring about the obedience of faith for the sake of his name among all the nations, including you who are called to belong to Jesus Christ,"
 - ii. Romans 16:25–27: "Now to him who is able to strengthen you according to my gospel and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery that was kept secret for long ages but has now been disclosed and through the prophetic writings has been made known to all nations, according to the command of the eternal God, to bring about the obedience of faith— to the only wise God be glory forevermore through Jesus Christ! Amen."
- d. The obedience that belongs to faith; to have faith is to obey God.
- e. To trust in that obedience is where we begin our lesson.

2. Under a Curse

- a. Galatians 3:10–12: "For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.' Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.' But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them.'"
- b. This phrase comes from Moses
 - i. Deuteronomy 27:11–14: "That day Moses charged the people, saying, 'When you have crossed over the Jordan, these shall stand on Mount Gerizim to bless the people: Simeon, Levi, Judah, Issachar, Joseph, and Benjamin. And these shall stand on Mount Ebal for the curse: Reuben, Gad, Asher, Zebulun, Dan, and Naphtali. And the Levites shall declare to all the men of Israel in a loud voice:'"
 - ii. Verses 15-26 are all curses for disobedience to the Law of Moses.
 - iii. Deuteronomy 27:15–17: "'Cursed be the man who makes a carved or cast metal image, an abomination to the Lord, a thing made by the hands of a craftsman, and sets it up in secret.' And all the people shall answer and say, 'Amen.' "'Cursed be anyone who dishonors his father or his mother.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' "'Cursed be anyone who moves his neighbor's landmark.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"
 - iv. Deuteronomy 27:26: "'Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen.'"

- c. Trusting in adherence to the law.
 - i. This trust in their obedience characterized the Pharisees of the day.
 - ii. Romans 10:1–5: "Brothers, my heart's desire and prayer to God for them is that they may be saved. For I bear them witness that they have a zeal for God, but not according to knowledge. For, being ignorant of the righteousness of God, and seeking to establish their own, they did not submit to God's righteousness. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes. For Moses writes about the righteousness that is based on the law, that the person who does the commandments shall live by them."
 - iii. The Galatians, by fooling around with circumcision and Jewish festivals, had obligated themselves, under penalty of God's curse, to keep the whole law.
 - iv. God, even in the Old Testament, was looking for an "obedient faith" in his children, not merely the legalistic type of rule-keeping, which was the essence of the Law.
- d. If we choose to trust in our adherence to any law, we live and die by that adherence to the law.
 - i. We must abide by everything the law says.
 - ii. We live in a country of laws.
 - iii. If we break the law, then we are liable for punishment that comes with it, be it a ticket, jail, or even execution.
 - iv. Obedience to all the laws except one still puts us in violation of the law.
 - 1. Have you ever gone 76 mph on the highway, run a red light, or a stop sign?
 - 2. Have you ever taken a deduction you were not qualified to take on your taxes?
 - 3. Have you ever taken a job that paid "under the table"?
- e. No one is justified by adherence to the law.
 - i. Adherence to The Law is not of faith.
 - ii. Regarding right standing (salvation) with God, the choice is faith or law, not faith and law.
 - iii. Any time we trust our ability to keep the law as an access to God, we fail.
 - iv. The Judaizers had turned faith in God into rules for God.
 - v. Even in the Old Testament, the Israelites were only right by personal faith in God.
 - 1. 1 Samuel 15:22: "And Samuel said, 'Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, as in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, and to listen than the fat of rams.'"
 - 2. Isaiah 1:11–17: "What to me is the multitude of your sacrifices? says the Lord; I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of well-fed beasts; I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs, or of goats. 'When you come to appear before me, who has required of you this trampling of my courts? Bring no more vain offerings; incense is an abomination to me. New moon and Sabbath and the calling of convocations— I cannot endure iniquity and solemn assembly. Your new moons and your appointed feasts my soul hates; they have become a burden to me; I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide my eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not listen; your hands are full of blood. Wash yourselves; make yourselves clean; remove the evil of your deeds from before my eyes; cease to do evil, learn to do good; seek justice, correct oppression; bring justice to the fatherless, plead the widow's cause.'"

3. Micah 6:6–8: "With what shall I come before the Lord, and bow myself before God on high? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the Lord be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousands of rivers of oil? Shall I give my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul?" He has told you, O man, what is good; and what does the Lord require of you but to do justice, and to love kindness, and to walk humbly with your God?"
4. Matthew 3:9–10: "And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham. Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire."
- vi. The Israelites were never right with God because of their lineage from Abraham.
- f. If we trust in our adherence to any law, we are under a curse!
- g. That is why Paul quotes Habakkuk.
 - i. This is God's answer to Habakkuk's second complaint: why are you (God) going to use the unrighteous nations to punish Israel?
 - ii. Habakkuk 2:4: "Behold, his soul is puffed up; it is not upright within him, but the righteous shall live by his faith."
3. Redeemed
 - a. Galatians 3:13–14 "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree"— so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."
 - b. Jesus redeemed us from the curse by becoming a curse.
 - c. "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree."
 - i. Deuteronomy 21:22–23: "And if a man has committed a crime punishable by death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree, his body shall not remain all night on the tree, but you shall bury him the same day, for a hanged man is cursed by God. You shall not defile your land that the Lord your God is giving you for an inheritance."
 - ii. All the scholars I read agree that this is talking of someone already dead but then hung on a tree after death.
 - iii. "Not that the Jews put to death malefactors by hanging, but after having put them to death otherwise, in order to brand them with peculiar ignominy [public shame or disgrace], they hung the bodies on a tree, and such malefactors were accursed by the law. The Jews in contempt called Him the hanged one. Hung between heaven and earth as though unworthy of either." George Barlow
 - iv. 2 Corinthians 5:21: "For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God."
 - d. The blessing of Abraham comes to the Gentiles.
 - i. All families (nations) of the earth shall be blessed.
 - ii. Redeemed means to ransom, to buy off.
 - iii. Redeemed is Christ freeing men from the dominion of the Mosaic law at the price of his death.
 - iv. God's plan was always to redeem all men (even though by the time of Christ, the Jews considered themselves the only ones favored by God).

- e. We receive the promised spirit through faith.
 - i. The prophet Joel writes, "I will pour out my Spirit on all flesh," and Luke repeats it in Acts.
 - ii. Romans 5:1–5: "Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Through him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand, and we rejoice in hope of the glory of God. Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not put us to shame, because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us."
- f. We see this redemption, this obedience of faith, this "pouring out" of the Spirit in Acts.
 - i. Acts 2:37–41: "Now when they heard this they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, "Brothers, what shall we do?" And Peter said to them, "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins, and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. For the promise is for you and for your children and for all who are far off, everyone whom the Lord our God calls to himself." And with many other words he bore witness and continued to exhort them, saying, "Save yourselves from this crooked generation." So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls."
 - ii. I don't trust in my immersion (baptism) or in my obedience to be immersed.
 - iii. I trust that the powerful working of God washed me clean when I was immersed (baptized).
 - iv. Colossians 2:11–12: "In him also you were circumcised with a circumcision made without hands, by putting off the body of the flesh, by the circumcision of Christ, having been buried with him in baptism, in which you were also raised with him through faith in the powerful working of God, who raised him from the dead."
- 4. Be righteous
 - a. Do not rely on your ability to follow God's Law.
 - b. Rely on God and His promises.
 - c. Live by Faith (an obedience of faith).