
Saved by Grace Alone. Let Your Works Respond Accordingly.

DARRELL DELANEY

Sometimes we start the Christian life like a rescued swimmer; and then act like we had to paddle to the shore on our own. In Galatians, Paul won't let us forget who saved us and who sustains us. Grace frees us from earning and trains us to live a life that looks like Jesus. That is what we are going to discuss next on *Groundwork*.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Welcome to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Scott Hoezee.

DARRELL DELANEY

And I am Darrell Delaney; and Scott, we are in part four of our four-part series on grace and works. We have traced a clear path through all these episodes. In the first episode, we talked about God's covenant mercy running from Abraham through to Jesus, and learned that salvation starts and ends with God's initiative; and in the second episode, we sat with Ephesians 2, and we set the order straight: Grace by faith, and then good works that God prepared in advance. Then in episode three, we heard James insist that living faith shows up in living deeds; not to earn favor but to show that faith is made visible by what we do.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Then in this episode, at least the first two parts of this episode, Darrell, we are going to go to another Pauline letter...an epistle...the one to the Galatians, where Paul is going to talk a lot about union with Christ and how that sets us free for spirit-shaped living. One of the things that we need to remember, Darrell, when we go to Galatians is that this was written in response to something very sad that Paul heard. After he left that region of Galatia, some false teachers snuck in. They seemed to have followed Paul all around, and then after he leaves town, they kind of sneak in to try to do some damage. These false teachers said: Hey, Paul told you Jesus did it all; not quite; not quite. You have to finish salvation yourself. You have to follow the law; keep kosher food laws, if you are a male you have to get circumcised. So, Jesus got the salvation ball rolling, you have to finish it. Paul heard about this and he was furious...absolutely angry. In all of the other twelve letters of Paul in the New Testament, he always starts with a thanksgiving section: Oh...

DARRELL DELANEY

Grace and peace be unto you in God our Father and the Lord Jesus Christ.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I thank God for you every time I remember you. I am so thankful for your partnership in the gospel. Not in Galatians: Paul, an apostle to the Christians in Galatia. You idiots! You fools! You have to be glad they didn't have access to those other letters, because it looks like: Hey, Paul; you skipped our thanksgiving section. Huh-uh; he doesn't have time for niceties. He is too upset. Too much is at stake here. So, that is the context of Galatians. People who had been deceived into thinking that what they did is was what finally actually got them saved, not just what Jesus did.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; he is going to actually hit that point over and over again that he is reminding believers that justification does not come from those works. It did not come from you following the law to the letter, which you could not do, by the way. It doesn't come from eating kosher; it doesn't come from those things. It comes from Christ's finished work; and he is making that clear. So, let's look at it in Galatians Chapter 2, where he says: ¹⁹For through the law I died to the law so that I might live for God. ²⁰I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me. ²¹I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness could be gained through the law, Christ died for nothing.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly. So, the Christian life is not a self-improvement plan with a little bit of religious twist. It is participation in the life of Christ. *In Christ* is Paul's favorite little prepositional phrase: *En Christo* in Greek; in Christ—Christ lives in me. I have union with Christ. That is our spiritual zip code now. That is where we are; and that is the context in which we live for God; that is the context in which we nurture our gratitude for everything that God has given us. So, the Galatians thought: Well, we have to earn merit badges now, I mean; so, Jesus got something going... I saw a tee-shirt one time of Jesus on the cross with a terrible slogan: Jesus did his best; you do the rest.

DARRELL DELANEY

Oh, my gosh!

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is the heresy that Paul was encountering there in Galatia; and he says: That is not the gospel. It is not another gospel. It is not gospel at all, it is bad news, in fact. If you have to finish it...if I have to finish salvation on my own, that is not good news; that is not gospel; that is really bad news, because I will mess it up.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes; that leads us back to toil. I mean, what was the point of dying on the cross, paying the penalty at Calvary? If Jesus is saying it is finished, and it is not finished, what is going on there? It would never work, and that danger can be really subtle, because we can begin with the Spirit and be in zeal and scorecards at the end, instead of allowing God to remember and bring us back to the source of the truth, which is what Paul teaches in Galatians 3. He says: ¹You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ²I 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? ³Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? That is the issue right here; the corrective thing is to keep the cross and the Spirit center, because if you do that, grace is not just opening the door, it is furnishing your house and supplying the power in your house...your heart is the house.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; almost two thousand years later, you can hear Paul's passion; you can hear his anger here at what they had been bewitched, he says: Who put a spell on you that you believe this bad, anti-gospel stuff? So, the corrective is to keep the cross and the Spirit at the center of our lives every day. The cross is like the center of gravity for us in all of our daily living. You know, Darrell, I think there are some things we could do every day to remind us of that—to recenter us. Some people know of the very simple Jesus prayer: Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy on me, a sinner. Just remember that that cross is at the center of everything.

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes, and it also...when the cross is at the center of everything, it shifts us from performance to presence, because his life is visible in our lives, and we stop asking how can we prove our worth and we start asking

how can we stay in step with the one who lives in me? So, the goal is to actually make sure that you keep Christ crucified. Remember the death, burial and resurrection is the first and foremost thing that happens that frees you up for the life that you are called to live; and you could do that by reading a gospel passage daily; you could do that by allowing the Spirit to recenter your affections on the one who loves you. The next thing you could do is pray and name the temptation to want to cut in and finish the work. Say: God, I started out in the Spirit, but Lord, help me when I usually drift off and try to figure things out on my own. Help me come back to remembering who you are and what you have done.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; stay with the Spirit...stay in step with the Spirit. We are going to get to that in just a minute, and we are going to look a little bit more in Galatians about how this freedom we have in Christ takes shape in the love we show. So, stay tuned.

Segment 2

DARRELL DELANEY

You are listening to *Groundwork*, where we dig into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives. I am Darrell Delaney.

SCOTT HOEZEE

And I am Scott Hoezee; and Darrell, we have just said that it is all about grace for Paul, and he absolutely had to hammer that home for the Galatians, who had been bewitched into thinking: Well, it is partly grace, but it is also a lot of what I have to do, otherwise I am not saved. If I don't finish, you know; no, no. So, it is all about grace, but grace does not leave us idle. It leads to a spirit-led life. So, let's jump ahead a little bit in Galatians. We have been in Galatians 2 and 3, this is now 5...Galatians 5 at the 13th verse:

You, my brothers and sisters, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the flesh; rather, serve one another humbly in love. ¹⁴For the entire law is fulfilled in keeping this one command: "Love your neighbor as yourself."

DARRELL DELANEY

I think it is beautiful, Scott, how Paul ties freedom to love here, because he talks about how you are called to be free, and this freedom gives you the ability to serve one another in love and humility. So, freedom in Christ does not mean all our limits are gone; we do whatever we want. No; we are actually freed up to love in a way that we couldn't love before; and so, without the Spirit, our instincts tilt inward, and with the Spirit our instincts tilt outward to serve one another.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and that is the outcome that grace produces. So, we said earlier, Darrell, that Galatians begins... It doesn't have a thanksgiving section. Paul is just hot under the collar. He is just seeing purple because these people have been deceived into thinking they finish salvation; that Jesus did not do enough...Jesus did not do it all, and very few things could make Paul more upset than somebody who says that. So, over half of Galatians, Paul is saying: Would you please stop thinking about what you do and just think about what Jesus does? Okay, that is the first half; but then, when you get to Chapter 5, all of a sudden Paul says: Oh, by the way; would you please start thinking about what you do? So, we get this famous passage in Galatians 5:22-25:

²² But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, ²³gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. ²⁴Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. ²⁵Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.

So, when we are talking about how we get saved, the first three or four chapters of Galatians: Stop thinking about what you do. When it comes to what happens now that we have been saved, please start thinking about what you do, and bear the fruit of the Spirit.

DARRELL DELANEY

The fruit of the Spirit... I love this word picture that he has given us here, because fruit is organic, and it grows because life is connected to a source; and Jesus said: I am the vine, you are the branches, and you will bear much fruit in me. Then, I think, Paul is a little bit borrowing from that, because the Spirit's fruit is one life with many tastes and not nine separate trophies to collect so that you can say you are righteous. No; the love leads the list in this one because it is the flavor that goes throughout the entire vine. We see very practically this thing happening in peoples' lives, and I am glad there is no law against it, because when love ripens, joy is no longer tied to circumstances; peace is no longer fragile; patience is no longer rare; kindness is no longer occasional; goodness is no longer optional; faithfulness is no longer seasonal; gentleness is no longer weakness; and self-control is no longer a lost cause. And you will see all of that happening in the life of a believer as evidence that they believe in Christ.

SCOTT HOEZEE

That is really good; you should publish that. That is really well put; and you know, we...sometimes on *Groundwork* we have noticed the difference between the fruit of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The gifts of the Spirit are different for different people. I am a preacher, somebody else is a teacher; somebody else is really gifted in hospitality; somebody else is really gifted in...you know. Gifts are different person to person, but not the fruit, okay. The nine fruit of the Spirit...this is not a buffet where you say: Let's see; I will take a little bit of patience, but I don't need self-control...I don't like self-control. I will take a little scoop of goodness. No; all nine, as you just said, they are yoked...they are linked together; they are not optional. Gifts are different for different people, but the fruit of the Spirit are the same for every Christian believer.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, underneath all of those gifts these are character traits that every believer carries. You know why? Because Jesus carried them, and we live by his Spirit; and that is what it means to keep in step with the Spirit. So, I am wondering how ordinary believers do that? How do they keep in step with believers? One way is they start small and they stay close. I mean, you could begin your day like this: One-sentence prayer: Holy Spirit, lead my next words. You know, that short prayer could invite the Spirit into the first choice and not the last choice; and when your day unfolds, you could let love set the pace, because there could be a tense moment, but then you actually ask a quiet question inside. So, there are obviously ways that the love, the joy, the peace, the patience and so forth can show up in real-time situations; and when they do that, that means that the Spirit is making ordinary things where Christ is being visible in those ordinary things.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; you know, I often have it...maybe you do, too, Darrell. Sometimes, if I am going into a meeting and there is something really contentious on the agenda...there is something that kind of gets people a little...gets their blood warm, right? I will often say: Lord, season my words with grace; you know, let my speech be temperate; don't let me fly off the handle if somebody says something I think is off the wall. Season my words with grace.

DARRELL DELANEY

I am going to pray that prayer *in* the meeting.

SCOTT HOEZEE

There you go, yes; I do it in both places; but that is what it means to keep step with the Spirit. We want the Spirit and not our weak, human flesh to have the last word. We have crucified the flesh. That does not mean that Paul is degrading the importance of our physical bodies, but *flesh* is a stand-in for Paul for sin—for the sinful person; because, you know, the old patterns of how we used to live or how we are tempted to live, they still have their appeal. Old rivalries are sometimes hard to overcome; but crucifying the flesh is just saying a simple “No” at the right time.

We looked at Titus before. He says: Where the grace of God teaches us to say “No” to all ungodliness and to say “Yes.” So, “No” to a word spoken that would tear somebody down; “Yes” to a word spoken that would

build somebody up. “No” to being impatient and losing our temper; “Yes” to being patient and kind and serving all around us.

DARRELL DELANEY

It is an act of service to people, even if no one sees it. It is a beautiful thing. What I found is that freedom that Christ that Paul is talking about in Galatians 5, it changes the culture of the community that you live in; it changes the culture of the church that you worship in; in the place you work; in the places you go; even on your social media. It changes the way you show up, because the way you meet...in that kind of meeting you were talking about. You are going to sound different in that meeting because you are going to choose clarity and you are not going to choose cruelty. I mean, hospitality shows up differently because people choose presence over performance. It is really beautiful to see what happens when the Spirit ripens in ordinary people. It is a powerful thing to see.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Exactly; and you know, social media would look a lot different, even for Christian people, I am afraid to say, if we really brought the fruit of the Spirit to bear before we put up a post on Facebook, before we make some nasty comment on Facebook, which is easy to do because you are not face-to-face with the person, and so you get a little cutting. If we brought keeping in step with the Spirit to Facebook, Christian Facebook posts at least, would look a whole lot different than they often do; and we need the Spirit to be with us every day in every step and every day for us to be faithful. That is what Eugene Peterson once called the long obedience in the same direction...

DARRELL DELANEY

Yes.

SCOTT HOEZEE

This is over the long haul; but this is freedom, Paul says, you know; we don't go into license and say: Well, if I am free, then what I do doesn't matter. No; it still matters. We dealt with legalism that says: Well, I have to do all this, or I am not going to get saved. No, no. We keep step with the Spirit every day in freedom that we have been set free that we don't have to do these things, we get to do them, and we are eager to do them. Well, coming up next, we will pull the whole series together and set a clear path forward. So, stay tuned.
Segment 3

DARRELL DELANEY

I am Darrell Delaney, with Scott Hoezee, and you are listening to *Groundwork*; and Scott, across this series, we have been asking how grace and works fit together. The thread is simple but it is strong. We always talked about God moving first. We receive by faith second; and then after that, we are joined to Christ and dwelt by the Spirit; and our lives begin to eventually look like the one who saved us. So, we can keep that clear with a couple of passages here that we have as well.

SCOTT HOEZEE

A very well-known passage from Romans 8:1. Paul writes: Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, ²because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit who gives life has set you free from the law of sin and death. ³For what the law was powerless to do because it was weakened by the flesh, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh to be a sin offering. And so he condemned sin in the flesh, ⁴in order that the righteous requirement of the law might be fully met in us, who do not live according to the flesh but according to the Spirit.

DARRELL DELANEY

So, we see here that assurance came first. In Christ, there is no condemnation. Period. Full stop. Full sentence. And then God did what the law could not do. So, that would resolve our fear...and the fear, you know, the fear that fuels your performance...that makes you think you've got to earn your way...that actually satisfies that, because Christ did what we couldn't do; and then direction follows, because the righteous

requirement that came before that cannot be done on just human terms; it cannot be done. So, without the Spirit in our lives, we are not able to do those things; but the good news is that we walk according to the Spirit and we are fulfilled when we get into God's family because he says we belong, and not because we earned it.

SCOTT HOEZEE

You know, Paul begins Romans 8 with that "therefore," and so whenever you know a therefore, it is like, oh, well, therefore...what came right before that? That is the end of Romans 7, where Paul was really struggling, like: The good that I would do, I cannot do. I try to be good; I fail. I want to be good, but then, you know, oh, who... Wretched man that I am, he says. He is in like despair: Who will deliver me from the body of death? And then you get: Therefore...there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus. That is the setting of the "therefore" that...yes, you are right. We cannot do it. We are weak; we are sinful; we are totally depraved, to use a line that often comes up from the Calvinist part of Reformed theology. We are totally depraved. That is bad news, but therefore remember, here is the good news: You are not condemned; not if you are in Christ. There is no condemnation. That is the gospel. That is good news.

DARRELL DELANEY

That is good news; and Paul wants to make sure that we understand how we live in light of that. So, in Colossians Chapter 3 he talks about how believers live. He says: ¹²Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. ¹³Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. ¹⁴And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

SCOTT HOEZEE

So, identity first, right? You are...Paul says in Colossians 3...you are chosen...you are holy...you are dearly loved. That is grace. That is our identity. That is who we are. Then, the wardrobe comes next, because Paul talks about clothing yourselves; you know, it is like putting on a sweater. You are putting on a Jesus sweater; you are clothing yourselves, and that is the response to who we are. So, you put those together, and then that relationship between grace and works that we have been looking at in these four programs in this series, really comes into focus. Works are not the ticket to the kingdom; works are the attire of the citizens who got into the kingdom by grace alone. So, grace does not make effort unnecessary; grace makes Christlike effort possible.

DARRELL DELANEY

It's a beautiful thing, Scott. I mean, there is this old adage that says: The clothes don't make the person, but the person makes the clothes; in this case, the clothes make the person because the clothes are compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness, and patience. It is the character of the very Lord Christ who has done all these things, and shown us the example. So, when we live that way, we make that love visible. Now, I was thinking about this, too, as we bring this whole series to a close, not just this episode, how we tie these threads together in our own lives. We have seen the covenant promises of Abraham, and we learned that salvation begins with God's initiative and rests on God's faithfulness. And then Ephesians taught us that we learned the order that secures our hearts: Grace by faith-saved first; and then the good works are prepared in advance for us to do; and then James taught us that living faith shows up in embodied love; and in this episode, Galatians taught us that freedom is not permission to just drift and do whatever you want, but it is the power to serve as the Spirit bears fruit in us. So, how do we put that together? Give us some takeaways so we can wrap up this episode.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Yes; so, grace rescues then it recreates and then it finally produces love in our hearts and lives. So, three simple takeaways, Darrell: Keep the center. We talked about that earlier in this episode. The center of everything is Christ crucified. That is where we get our identity. We remember who made the first move, and it was not us; it was God. So, keep the center, and let that center of Christ crucified quiet anything toward fear and pride.

DARRELL DELANEY

The second thing, Scott, is walk in the Spirit, asking the Spirit for his cadence so that we can keep in step with the Spirit in real moments, and let love and patience and peace...the fruit of the Spirit...guide us in our reflexes, in our responses, and not just in our reactions. So, we allow the Spirit to take over how we walk.

SCOTT HOEZEE

I like that you use *reflexes* there, Darrell, because, you know, maybe as you grow...maybe there are times early in our walk of faith and so forth, where keeping in step with the Spirit means: Oh, I am about to bite your head off, but bite my tongue...bite my tongue. But hopefully, if we mature through the Spirit, we will get to the point where it will be a reflex to do the *right* thing. I won't have to bite my tongue because I wasn't tempted to say the nasty thing to you at all. It has become a habit...a habitus...in me. So, the good things become a reflex, not the bad things, like losing my temper or cutting you down, or something.

Then, the third thing...so, we keep the center...keep the cross at the center; we walk in the Spirit; and the third takeaway: We wear the wardrobe. Again, as the holy, chosen and beloved people of God, we clothe ourselves with compassion, with forgiveness; with all those fruit of the Spirit; with being, you know, amiable people...Christlike people; humble people, as Christ was humble. Then, wherever we live, whatever the work we do, wherever we go...whether we are at the beach or at the mall...we are not Christlike just when we are at church; we are Christlike at the beach; we are Christlike at the movies; we are Christlike when we are shopping; when we are interacting with waiters and waitresses at the restaurant or the checkout clerk and the bag person at the grocery store. We are Jesus in those places, too.

DARRELL DELANEY

It's a beautiful thing that we get to do those things, not that we have to do them; and those things are not us earning our righteousness, but they are gratitude for the one who did. So, when churches live this way, when people live this way, we get a clear picture of Jesus. Saved by grace through faith for good works that God prepared, and that is the freedom that bears the fruit; thanks be to God.

SCOTT HOEZEE

Well, thanks for listening and digging deeply into scripture with *Groundwork*. We are your hosts, Scott Hoezee and Darrell Delaney. Join us again next time as we continue to dig deeply into scripture to lay the foundation for our lives.

Connect with us at groundworkonline.com to share what *Groundwork* means to you, or tell us what you would like to hear discussed next on *Groundwork*.

DARRELL DELANEY

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