

Sermon Title: **God's Blessing: Our Church Covenant 6**

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Vessel: Russ LaFlamme

Scripture Reference: **Galatians 3:16-29**

Thesis: **The final article of our Church Covenant asks God to bless us as we grow as individuals and as a body in Christ.**

Purpose: **We will seek to explain what it means to be blessed by God.**

Key Word: "Covenant"

Key Points: #1 A Promise

#2 A Mediator

#3 A New Covenant

I) Introduction:

Scripture Reading is: **Galatians 3:16-29**

A) The Setting:

- 1) **For the last 6 weeks we have been looking at our own Church Covenant.**
 - (a) This Sunday we read the last paragraph of our Church Covenant.
 - (b) Our Covenant reminds us of our commitment to God and each other;
- 2) **While not a legally binding agreement . . . we have a moral obligation to obey God in our relationships.**
 - (a) I hope and pray that you have gotten as much out of this study as I have.
- 3) **After the introduction the first area of emphasis is the LOVE that binds us together.**
 - (a) We are to submit to the Holy Spirit and allow Him to help us to grow through our careful training using the Holy Scriptures as our guide.
 - (b) For we are to be people of the Word living and teaching it to our children.
 - (c) And we promise to use our time, talents, and resources to glorify God.
 - (d) We are to use our gifts of the Spirit to fulfill the mission of Christ's church.
 - (e) Through our unity we are to be a witness to the world of God's transforming power.
- 4) **The last paragraph of our covenant reminds us to ask for God's Blessing.**
 - (a) What does that mean? . . . What does that entail?
 - (b) And just what are we asking of God?
 - (c) We will get into that and try to answer those questions in our study.
- 5) **Paul's letter to the Galatian Church has been called his manifesto of justification by faith and the liberty it produces.¹**
 - (a) Certain Jewish legalists were influencing the believers in Galatia to trade their freedom in Christ for bondage in the Law.
 - (b) Paul is refuting their false gospel of salvation by works (*which means trying to earn God's favor through our efforts*);
 - (c) in order to demonstrate the superiority of our Salvation by faith in Jesus.
 - (d) We are justified before our HOLY God by our FAITH in Jesus alone.
 - (e) We cannot buy or earn our way into God's Kingdom.
- 6) **In the third Chapter of Galatians Paul is explaining God's doctrine of Grace.**
 - (a) God's unmerited favor and in so doing gives us an illustration pointing out that Abraham was justified by his faith;
 - (b) Not by his works.
- 7) **Paul uses an every day example to his hearers to show that a covenant is a promise that is not to be broken.**
 - (a) The New Revised Standard Version calls it a will
 - (b) And the New Living Translation calls it an irrevocable agreement.
 - (c) All of these speaking of a promise to do or not to do something.
 - (d) In this case Abraham's covenant is backed up by God's own Word.
- 8) **So, let's conclude the study of our covenant by turning in our Bibles to Galatians 3:16-29. I am reading from the NIV today.**

1 Talk Thru the Bible, Bruce Wilkinson & Kenneth Boa, Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1983, Pg.393

B) Sermon Prayer

C) (The Hook)

1) Illustration: Keeping a Promise

(a) **The 1989, an Armenian earthquake needed only four minutes to flatten the nation and kill thirty thousand people.²**

- (i) Moments after that deadly tremor ceased, a father raced to an elementary school to save his son.
- (ii) When he arrived, he saw that the building had been leveled.
- (iii) Looking at the mass of stones and rubble, he remembered a promise he had made to his child: *"No matter what happens, I'll always be there for you."*
- (iv) Driven by his own promise, he found the area closest to his son's room and began to pull back the rocks.
- (v) Other parents arrived and began sobbing for their children.
- (vi) *"It's too late,"* they told the man. *"You know they are dead. You can't help."*
- (vii) Even a police officer encouraged him to give up.

(b) **But the father refused; eight hours, sixteen, then thirty-two, and for thirty-six hours he dug.**

- (i) His hands were raw and his energy gone, but he refused to quit.
- (ii) Finally, after thirty-eight wrenching hours, he pulled back a boulder and heard his son's voice.
- (iii) He called his boy's name, *"Arman! Arman!"*
- (iv) And a voice answered him, *"Dad, it's me!"*
- (v) Then the boy added these priceless words, *"I told the other kids not to worry. I told them if you were alive, you'd save me, and when you saved me, they'd be saved, too. Because you promised, 'No matter what, I'll always be there for you.'"*

2) **Keeping a promise is important.**

- (a) Our covenant is a promise that outlines our relationship with God and each other.
- (b) Doing the things outlined in our Covenant will lead to God's blessing.

3) **If we Love God and one another it will be because we have asked Jesus to come into our hearts as Lord.**

- (a) And He promises to send the Holy Spirit when we ask Him to move in and begin to transform us into the likeness of Jesus.

(b) **We have learned that the Holy Spirit gives us Fruit.**

- (i) Which is the same for all of us: **Love, Joy, Peace, Patience, Kindness, Goodness, Faithfulness, Gentleness and Self-control.** (Gal 5:22)
- (ii) All of these fruit begin to show up as a result of God working to clean up our lives.

(c) **We have learned that the Holy Spirit also gives us gifts as well.**

- (i) These gifts are not the same for everyone; but are given as God's Spirit determines.
- (ii) We are to use our divine gifts for the building up of this body of Christ.

(d) **Last week we learned that it is God's Spirit that unifies us as a body with Christ as the Head.**4) **So in many ways by receiving God's Grace we have already been blessed.**

- (a) But our Covenant goes on to ask God to further bless us.
- (b) By helping us to grow and guide us in our journey of becoming Christ like.

5) **Our Covenant reminds us that we have defeated the second death because we have been buried with Christ in baptism,**

- (a) This means we have in effect killed our will by giving over to His Will represented in our baptism.

- (b) Therefore, we will not be defeated with physical death; but will be risen with Jesus as new creations to live eternally in His Kingdom.
- (c) **2 Corinthians 5:17**, "**Therefore if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come.**" (NASB)
- 6) **What I have just given you is an outline of our church Covenant.**
 - (a) This is what makes it such a great document.
 - (b) So, in our final message on this series I want to share about God's blessing.

TS: Using our reading in Galatians, the first thing we see about God's Blessing is that it comes in the form of . . .

II) Body: (Key Points)

A) Key Point #1: **A Promise**

- 1) **The father in our illustration knew the importance of keeping a promise.**
 - (a) Paul begins by telling us that promises were spoken to Abraham.
 - (b) What promise is Paul referring to here?
- 2) **Well every Jew who knew his scriptures from the teachings of Moses would be aware of God's Covenant with Abraham.**
 - (a) It is found in **Genesis 12:1-3**, "**The Lord had said to Abram, "Go from your country, your people and your father's household to the land I will show you. 2 "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. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."**
 - (b) This was God's promise, God's covenant with Abraham formally known as Abram until God changed his name.
 - (c) This was a covenant of Blessing if Abraham would go as the Lord directed and just have faith that God keeps His promises.
- 3) **The promise was threefold**
 - (a) God would bless Abraham by making him into a great nation
 - (b) God would bless Abraham by making his name Great.
 - (c) God would bless ALL peoples of the earth through him.
- 4) **Paul tells us that this promise would be fulfilled through the seed of Abraham meaning his descendants.**
 - (a) And it was through Abraham's seed that the fulfillment of that Blessing came.
 - (b) Abraham is the Father of the Nation of Israel.
 - (c) And it is through Abraham's people that Jesus came.
 - (d) The one Who became our Savior, our Messiah, our King of Kings and Lord of Lords.

TS: This leads us to the next part; God's blessing comes by way of . . .

B) Key Point #2: **A Mediator**

- 1) **It was another 420 years from the time that God made His promise to Abraham until Moses received the Ten Commandments, God's Law.**
 - (a) The Law was another type of Covenant;
 - (b) Paul tells us that it was a covenant given not to replace His Covenant with Abraham.
 - (c) Paul reasons that if it were to set aside the covenant with Abraham then God would be breaking His promise to Abraham . . .
 - (d) AND GOD ALWAYS KEEPS HIS WORD!
- 2) **So, Paul asks the rhetorical question, "Is the Law opposed to the promise of God?"**
 - (a) Answering it himself, Paul say "**Absolutely, NOT!**"
 - (b) Paul is asking if the Law, "the Ten Commandments" are capable of mediating or covering our sins before God.

- (c) The answer is an emphatic NO!
- (d) The Law was only put into effect by a mediator to show God's people their need for a deliverer.
- 3) **In other words, the Law was given as a temporary agreement until the promise could be clarified and fulfilled.**
 - (a) You see God's Word teaches us that the whole world, the whole human race, is being held a prisoner to sin.
 - (b) The Law served the purpose of making us aware of our condition and need for a Savior.
 - (c) Jesus came as the Savior of the world; He is the only one who could mediate this dilemma between a Holy Righteous God and people marred with SIN!
 - (d) And so, Jesus came to restore the relationship between God and mankind.
- 4) **The purpose of the Law was to lead us to Jesus Christ who could save us by our faith in Him.**
 - (a) There simply is no other way for salvation except through God's Son.
 - (b) Jesus said, "***I am the way, the truth and the life, no man comes to the Father except through Me.***" (John 14:6)
- 5) **Illustration: THE RIGHT NAME OPENS DOORS³**
 - (a) **Mark Roberts wrote of a time when he visited the Capitol as a guest of Congressman John Campbell.**
 - (i) As long as he was with the congressman, he could walk freely around the Capitol,
 - (ii) entering many areas that were reserved "*for authorized personnel only,*" reserved for members of Congress and their guests.
 - (iii) He could enter those places, not because of who he was or because of what he had done, but because of who the Congressman was.
 - (iv) The name "Congressman John Campbell" opened doors.
 - (v) So it is when we come before God in the name of Jesus.
 - (b) **Jesus is our mediator (1 Timothy 2: 5), our advocate (1 John 2:1), and our High Priest (Hebrews 4:14-16).**
 - (i) Praying in Jesus' name is a recognition that He is our mediator, that we do not deserve an audience with the Father.
 - (ii) It is a recognition that we only have authority to come to the Father because Jesus, our High Priest, has opened the way for us.
 - (iii) He died on the cross to save us.
 - (iv) We are unworthy of approaching the throne of grace on our own without our advocate.
 - (v) The name of Jesus opens doors.

TS: **This brings us to our final point; God's Blessing establishes . . .**

III) Conclusion (Life Application)

A) **A New Covenant**

- 1) This is what is meant by Jesus when He said in Matthew 5:17, "***Do not think that I have come to abolish the Law or the Prophets; I have not come to abolish them but to fulfill them.***"
- 2) God fulfilled His promise to Abraham in sending His Son Jesus.

3) **The new covenant now needed to be greater than the first.**

(a) Not to abolish the Old, but to be greater and better than the old.

(b) **Hebrews 8:6-12** explains the new covenant, “. . . *the ministry Jesus has received is as superior to theirs . . . as the covenant of which he is mediator is superior to the old one, since the new covenant is established on better promises.* 7 *For if there had been nothing wrong with that first covenant, no place would have been sought for another.* 8 *But God found fault with the people and said: “The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah.* 9 *It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord.*

10 *This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.* 11 *No longer will they teach their neighbor, or say to one another, ‘Know the Lord,’ . . . because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest.* 12 *For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more.”*

4) Now while these verses were clearly written to the Hebrews as a people our passage from Galatians shows that we can apply them to us as well.

(a) **Galatians 3:26-29**, “*For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.* 27 *For all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* 28 *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free man, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* 29 *And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according to promise.”*

(b) Paul clearly wants us all to know that we can claim the promise if we belong to Jesus.

(c) If you have given your life to Jesus, then you are part of the family.

(d) You too will know God’s blessings.

(e) We have been made new with Christ and have entered a new and holy life!

B) Before we end I want to give you an opportunity to make sure you are right with God.

1) If there is anything that you need to take care of before we leave here today?

2) You will know if the Holy Spirit is prompting you to get it right.

3) Confess it to Jesus, come for prayer if you like; and if you feel God’s Spirit prompting you; please don’t be embarrassed; God loves you that much.