

THE LOS ANGELES UNIVERSITY CATHEDRAL

Dr. Gene Scott, Pastor/Teacher

PULPIT

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GALATIANS 4: THE "ABC'S" OF FAITH

by Dr. w. euGENE SCOTT (Ph.D., Stanford University)

I'm sure the image some have had of the Great Reformer, Martin Luther, is shattered when he says that "harlots and tax collectors and sinners have a better chance of getting to heaven than legalists who rely on their works." There are some people that almost committed harakiri when they heard me say that, particularly when I demonstrated it by reading it out of Luther's sermons on Galatians.

The issue he is focusing on, is where you place your reliance for salvation: on your works, no matter how much they may surpass others in approximating or moving in the direction of the Law of God, or whether your reliance is totally apart from those works, on God's work of grace—which is a gift, *charisma*,



Dr. Gene Scott

unmerited favor—because of something else: FAITH.

Faith equals (how many times have I told you?) 90% courage, 9% tenacity or endurance (what the King James translates as patience) and 1% all that other super-spiritual stuff. Courage is 90%; raw guts. There are those who ignorantly say, "Scott preaches an easier Gospel."

God likes courage; He doesn't like cowards. Cowardice and fear are not synonyms. Cowards give way to fear; men of faith are like David, who said, "What time I am afraid, I will (that's guts; reach down and grab hold of your innards) — I WILL trust in the Lord."

This is the ABC of faith. Faith (*pistis* in the Greek) comes from *pisteo* which is a verb; it was never intended to be just a noun in the original language. Without the verb to undergird it, distortion happens.

The English language has conveniently separated "believing" from the rest of faith, thereby confusing the entire stream of the Church. "Faith" and "belief" are not synonyms. You cannot translate the derivatives of the verb *pisteo* simply with the word belief; faith is more than belief.

FAITH involves Action, based upon Belief, sustained by Confidence that that which is believed is true. By this definition, you have a subject, you have the act, you have an object.

Biblical FAITH is an Act based on a Belief and sustained by Confidence

that God's Word is forever settled in heaven.

We ought to have a new word in our language; we ought to translate *pisteo* with the verb "faithe." Then we could have the noun "faithers." Faithers are the subject who are doing the faithing and they produce a result which is the faithed.

A lot of confusion would go out of the teaching on faith if we'd just bury the word "belief" and make it but a subordinate part of faith, and only refer to it when the meaning of the text has to do with only that mental activity which is belief. Belief involves the mind, and faith involves the mind plus the will and action. It also involves the emotions, confidence to sustain faith.

If I were a teacher on Mars Hill with a bunch of philosophers in front of me (as I've told you probably ten thousand times since I've been here), in the usual neutral and disengaged role of the teacher, I would teach my students in the Greek frame that *pisteo* defines an activity of mankind without which you cannot survive.

You cannot act without it being based subconsciously or consciously on some kind of belief, sustained by confidence—including getting out of bed in the morning. You don't think about it, but you expect your feet to hit the floor and not the ceiling which, thought about, is an action based upon a belief that came, probably, through experience rather than

teaching of theories, and a confidence that gravity works.

I would have taught students in that day that nobody has a choice not to *fai*the; “not to *fai*the” doesn’t exist. The only choice you have is on the objects to which you will attach your *fai*thing action, what you decide is true enough that you can have enough confidence in it to hang your body on it in continuing action. And until Jesus came, that would define *fai*th.

But God, in His rightful and pre-emptory way (and, I believe, as part of the fullness of time that existed when He sent forth His Son), reached into the stream of that language which dominated the world frame in that day (so much more precise than the Hebrew or the Aramaic) and He grabbed this word and made it His.

Whereas on Mars Hill, as a philosopher without the knowledge of God, I’d sit there as the teacher and say, “Okay, students, *fai*th is an action based upon belief sustained by a confidence that you must maintain in order to live; and your choice in life is to pick the object of your *fai*th that can satisfy the truth that you feel sufficiently to say, ‘I believe this;’ then hang your body on it, sustain it with confidence, start acting on it, thus trying your theory.

No matter what your object of *fai*th is, it’s still *fai*th, equal in merit and value in the abstract. You prove it to yourself, and it will become valuable and meaningful to you to the degree that your continued action builds the confidence, sustains the belief, and strengthens the action by proven experience as you act on it.”

By this definition, I could conveniently step back as a teacher and say, “Now, since your choice is among the objects, plan your life and carefully examine that which you are going to believe, have confidence in, and hang your body on, but that’s still theory—you’re not *fai*thing until you attach your body in action to what you believe and what you have confidence in.”

In the fullness of time, God sent forth His Son into a language frame providing the word *pisteo* and He made it His for His Word. Real *fai*th, saving *fai*th, became Action, based upon a Belief in God’s *fai*thfulness to His Word, sustained by Confidence in God’s own nature of *fai*thfulness—that He’s not a man to lie, nor the Son of Man to repent; what He says He’ll do, what He speaks He’ll make good; that God, as Jeremiah said, will hasten His Word to perform it, as a magnifying glass grabs the rays of the sun and penetrates by focusing on the object, He’ll bring every strength as Lord of Hosts to focus and cause His word to come to pass. That confidence in God’s Word will cause you to act, hanging your body on a Promise made by God, forever settled in heaven, even though time has not yet adjusted to it.

At *fai*th encounters with time/space conflicts, you have the choice of letting the stream of time and circumstance defy God’s Promise, or reach up and grab God’s Word and say to yourself, “I am that catalyst point which will reach through the stuff of time, and grab this Promise of God because forever, O Lord, Thy Word is settled. When God spoke, not a thing became everything; He will again speak on future time, and everything will rearrange. God’s Word was, is and shall be, before and after the earth that now is. His Word, forever settled in heaven, is where I will put my grasp, and no matter what the circumstance says, I will hang on to it. If I die still hanging on, I’m translated instantly into the realm where there’s no friction with, ‘Thus sayeth the Lord...Forever settled in heaven.’ Until that time comes — with Luther —though the whole world be against the Word, a “*fai*ther” will be against the whole world, hanging on to God’s Word.”

That is what God chose to identify as FAITH. Action based upon Belief and Confidence, that “Forever, O Lord, Thy word is settled in heaven.”

I repeat that God will hasten His Word to perform it. Any other action, no matter how meritorious the object, is not Biblical “*fai*the.” Unlike the professor who can stand back and say “choose among many objects,” the preacher of *fai*th knows that only those acts of man based on a belief in God’s Word, sustained by a confidence in God’s nature to be *fai*thful to His Word — that and that alone qualifies as “FAITH.”

Everything else is *apistis*. Greek has a nifty little verbal transmission: there is no neutral gear. *Pistis* or *apistis*. *Pistis* is going in *fai*th, *apistis* is opposite, or wrong direction. That means your object of *fai*th can be bad, or your object of *fai*th can be good, in the human, horizontal, ethical evaluation frame. It’ll be *saving* “*Fai*the” only if it is “*fai*the” focused on a Promise of God, sustained by confidence in God’s nature to be *fai*thful to His Word and to Himself. Every other act, no matter how bad, and how far down the spectrum in that direction, or how good, just qualifies as *apistis* (not *fai*th—even “against *fai*the”).

If I were to use adjectives, such “other-object-*fai*th” would be “not-saving-*fai*th”—but God doesn’t use adjectives here. God saw the word “*fai*th” and He made it His, just like the word *logos*. To those in the Greek world who believe in a personal being behind all reality, *logos* was the word they used to identify the mediator between man and that heretofore unknowable Ultimate Being of reality. God made the word *logos* His, and Christ became the *Logos*. God took *fai*th over, and everything else is a kind of *apistis*.

Now, our nature is such that we just really don’t want to be lumped into a pot with an Adolph Hitler or a Saddam Hussein. And you don’t have to be lumped in a pot with them in the horizontal sphere of relative ethics and good and badness, measured by the performance of men.

But from God’s view, there is that which saves eternally, and there is

that which doesn't do anything, that has its rewards down here, and doesn't do a thing for you in terms of eternity and relationship with God. Faith — action on God's Word — gets you eternal life, God's spirit in you, salvation. Everything else gets you things down here. It doesn't mean you say, "Then nothing matters, relative distinctions down here make it not worth pursuing any ends designed to help mankind." Go to that extreme and you become an Antinomian.

You know the Greek word for law, *nomos*; Antinomians were anti-law to the nihilation of grace as power to change. They were those who made the preaching of grace an excuse for sin, caused Paul, Jude and Peter to combat this heresy in the New Testament. This same heresy (the Antihuchisons) divided colonial Massachusetts, and includes the present-day people who believe that since works can gain nothing for you in eternity, then works are unimportant and go sin all the more that grace may abound.

I am now approaching that place in the book of Galatians that many of you have been waiting for with bated breath.

"What's he going to do with the phrase, 'Faith working in love'?"

I'm going to tell you a little history about it for openers, and the fights during the Reformation where the Papists said, "See, even Paul finally had to concede that works of love save and undergird faith."

Sorry, that won't fly. But I'm not to that verse yet. Or, "I wonder what he's going to do when he gets to the lusts of the flesh?"

Well, there are about fifteen different lists. And going out the gate, adultery is not even in the list of the earliest manuscripts, and it leads the list in the King James. "Oh, goody!" Fornication is *pornea* in the Greek. You don't have to stretch your brain too much, or become a semanticist to know the cognate of *pornea* do you? Porno? Now just maybe the good old King James that "Michael handed

Moses on Mount Sinai" (whoa!) might need a little help.

Contrary to what a lot of you think, I'm going to scare the bejesus out of you. I'm going to scare your britches off. It's obvious that some of you need it. Every preacher of grace from Paul to Luther to Gene Scott, and anyone else on the current scene, has to deal with the problem of grace as a message producing license.

I've told you the story of Bond Bowman in Detroit, Michigan, who had prayed for four years and said to me when he called me, "Gene, God has only shown me one man and I know it's you that must succeed me in Detroit."

Our nature is such that we really don't want to be lumped into a pot with Adolf Hitler or Saddam Hussein . . . but from God's view, there is that which saves eternally, and that which doesn't do anything for your relationship with God, that has its rewards down here.

He told me all the reasons why, and I told him that he'd prayed for four years and I'd had four seconds to hear it, and I needed some more prayer; but I had enough respect for Bond that I went and filled in for two months while he took a leave of absence.

God didn't want me to pastor there, but Bond was so sure he turned loose completely, which he hadn't done for forty years, and that enabled him to relax sufficient to get the strength to come back and have some of his best years.

But I shared with you the long discussions Bond and I used to have. He said, "Gene, the message of grace is the message, I know that. But when I preach it, my congregation takes advantage and it turns into

license, and I have to get the Law out to whip them back in line."

I determined then, thinking I probably never would pastor, if I ever pastored, I would dare to give grace its full chance to work.

I'd dare to give God the chance to do it without me creating a temporary corral to beat you into sufficient insensibility that I could start over with grace again, and hope that somehow God would show up before you wrecked yourselves this time around.

I want it clear, even before I get to the passages which follow (which is Paul's attempt to deal with Antinomianism — those that took the message of grace and abolished all moral restraint because the Law was dead); I want it clear that I am deliberately hammering the Law into the death insensibility that it should have, not to resurrect it again as the cure for Antinomianism, but to teach through these verses that follow, when Paul finally comes to that phrase and says, "You've been called unto liberty, brethren, only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh," to understand the life in the spirit which is the antidote to Antinomianism.

Not once in the history of the Church has any church yet transitioned through this stage. Luther didn't. Paul didn't. And I'm camping out on the closing passages of the fourth chapter and the opening of the fifth chapter because I want the Law so dead that it can't resurrect, at least until I get through the next phase.

Now I've put this foundation up here because I want you to just recognize the only thing that will save is *Faith*, period. That's all.

Faith in a Promise of God, like plugging a cord in a wall circuit, causes the current of God to flow from God. That current flows, and the father, when he contacts a Promise of God, hangs his body on it with the guts to hang on no matter what; he is plugged in, if you will, to God's own life. The manifestation of

God's presence may be different than the reality of God's presence in eternity.

But those manifestations of God's presence, that omnipresence of God and that born again presence indwelt which God implants in Faithers occurs the moment that the grip of faith kicks in and, at that instant, God gives the gift of salvation—seating you in Christ in heavenly places—and the judicial act of imputation is done; God puts on the spectacles of Jesus Christ and looks at you as though you were Jesus.

Instantly, when Faith takes hold of God's promise, the *kaporeth* or covering (which is what atonement means) is there in place, and between you and God's Law is that fulfilled Law incarnate in Christ which died on Calvary; and we, our old man, died with Him. God now looks at you (the Faither) as though you were Christ.

That's justification. You're taken as just like God, and imputed to you is the righteousness of Christ, and God views you as though you were Christ, with those spectacles he looks at you, and you are seen as seated in heavenly places with and in Christ, already there.

But beyond the judicial act is the born-again, life-changing experience. You don't have to vibrate, your hair doesn't have to stand on end. The reason the Resurrection is the basis of the faith is that if you can believe that Christ came through a locked door, through that rock (molecular displacement meaning nothing, or the putting them back together again); and if you can believe that the Life that raised up Jesus from the dead, took His regenerated body through a locked door, through the rock, and ascending off into the blue occurred, you aren't going to have any trouble taking the next step with your mind, that God can, through that same Word that raised up Christ from the dead, place a deposit of Himself in You.

Withdrawn when Adam sinned, barred by the barrier of our sins,

walled away by the swords of the cherubim, God having no access to us without being inconsistent with Himself, by His own voluntary act broke the wall of partition between us that Ephesians talks about. He ripped it apart (symbolized by the veil torn from top to bottom when Christ died) that He might now, on the basis of Christ, send to us the deposit of His life.

And God places in you, the moment faith connects, a deposit of His life. And that Life in you makes you a dual creature; a new creation in Christ Jesus, placed in you, capable of affecting your whole being.

You don't have to see radioactive material carried around to know your very cell structure will change. This is the reason I said earlier that I may be the only preacher on television (and now on shortwave radio worldwide) who really believes in the born-again experience.

God places a substance of Himself in you, and that new life in you comes as God's gift because of faith's connection — an act on the basis of God's Word, sustained with confidence that defies every circumstance, and wherever you're doing it, that keeps you in contact with God.

I cannot sever your relationship with God as long as faith is connecting. He places that unit of Himself in you, and left there long enough — more correctly said, maintained there long enough (because as the Hebrews letter said, you remain the house of God the same way you became the house of God, by continuing the faith connection), that spirit in you maintained will change you.

As the Bible says, that which is created of the spirit cannot sin; there is a new life in you incapable of sinning; there is an old life in you dominated by the desires of the flesh.

Paul picks a wartime phrase, that these two are dug in like military trench warfare, for a fight to the finish. The outcome is pre-determined: let God's life stay in, the flesh

will be displaced and the new life will bring forth fruit. You don't get the fruit of the spirit by will-power copying of the dead Law any more than you can get apples by shaking a tree. It comes from within, it is an out-growth.

Spirituality, by definition in the Greek, is the expression of the spirit. The spiritual person, by definition in the Greek, is the Spirit's person. When that power is in you, it will change you. You can't keep it from happening if it's there.

"Well, what if the surface portrayal of behavior shows that if it's there it ain't doing much?" You need to renew the connection.

This is the tragedy of the Church (and I'm anticipating the teaching of the end of the fifth chapter and into the sixth chapter). The tragedy of the Church is, they do what's necessary as an act of faith to get the Spirit in, and then when they see the slow growth, particularly with the buzzards looking on, they panic and seek to pound it from the outside on, instead of reinvoking the steps that keep God's spirit there, renewed and outflowing.

How did you get the spirit in? A simple act. What did Paul say? Christ is formed in your heart by faith.

Christianity has always had a problem in the Grecian world over one thing, and that's Aristotle's logic: "A" cannot be "A" and "not A" at the same time, when the Christian faith starts out in defiance of Aristotle's logic by saying in Christ (in the incarnation) you have "A" and "not A" all the time, in every way. He's man and not man at the same time, He's God and not God at the same time, all the time, everywhere, in every way.

And the deepest truths that Jesus teaches are paradoxical truths: you go up by going down. You don't go up because you went down in order to go up, you go up by going down — concomitant, simultaneous, paradoxical happening.

(Continued on page 6.)

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You don't even think about going up. You go down, God puts you up. You get by giving. You live by dying; you become first by being last; you become great by being least. Paradoxes. Aristotelian logic confuses it and tries to make it logical when it's a paradox.

Likewise, the confusion of the Church when it wedded itself to Greek philosophy is they have forgotten that you become righteous by not trying to be. You get righteousness by seeking something else, or more accurately, activating another track. You become righteous by faithing. God does the "righteousing," we do the "faithing." When righteousness wanes, instead of beating yourself to death, find an object of faith in God's Word, get out on that front line with courage, and go for it! Forget about your righteousness. The more righteous you become, the less you'll be aware of it.

How many of you came to this church, probably because I said to you, "You will never be told by me you have to change!"? How many of you in this congregation hadn't been

to church in five years until you came to this one? How many of you hadn't been to church in ten years?

Hallelujah! Thank God we're saving souls and not transplanting saints. How many were told you didn't have to change, that we don't make you change as a criteria for coming here? How many of you are surprised, you changed? How many of you didn't try to change? How many of you changed in spite of yourself? You're a success.

As we close the fourth chapter of Galatians, Paul compares those who go back to Sinai and pull the Law off that hill, and come to some new Jerusalem as the interpretive center, and from that new Jerusalem begin to lay the Law on you as an added necessity of being a Christian, Paul compares that to Abraham going into the tent and fornicating with Hagar. He says Hagar is Sinai, and Sinai is "new Jerusalems" which are now, and they produce children of bondage.

And he then says we are the "children of the free" as Isaac was, born of faith in the promise of God, a miracle that cannot be done by

human effort, and then he draws that conclusion that no church has been able to live with to the present day: Then as now, the children of bondage, who have resurrected off Sinai new rules to add to your relationship to God, will persecute the children of the free. They cannot live in the same house together.

From the Textus Receptus to the present, every major accepted text in the Greek adds the first verse of the fifth chapter to the last of the fourth chapter, because it is the conclusion, saying, "What shall we do, then, to these persecutors of the free?"

Throw them out! Separate from them! Because those who rely on works will continue to persecute, they cannot live in the same house together with those who derive righteousness from FAITH and are the children of the free (Isaac's).

Then Paul says, as the closing verse of the fourth chapter in the original manuscripts rather than the opening of the fifth, "Stand fast therefore in the liberty—or freedom—wherewith Christ has set us free."

□

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