



One Page Sermon

By Pastor Robb McCoy

October 1, 2023

The First Creed

Recap of sermon from October 1, 2023

Scripture: Galatians 3:19-29

My family has a new pastime—Formular One Racing. It has swept through our family. It dominates our discussions. We send memes to each other. We have a race-picking contest. One year ago we knew nothing about motorsports. I've always like the Indy 500, but I've never paid attention to the IndyCar season, F1, or NASCAR. But now we can tell you all about Lando Norris, Charles LeClerc, the Monaco Grand Prix, the importance of an efficient pit stop, and the strategic use of tyre compounds in hot or wet conditions.

There are a series of things that led us to this point, but you know what we never did? We never ordered the F1 Rule Book. We have learned some of the rules, but for the most part the rules only exist to keep the racing competitive and we trust those in charge of enforcing them.

We learned to love the stories, not the rules. We love the competition and the drama. We love the friendships and the rivalries. We don't know the intricacies of the rules or the specs of the engines. We've never analyzed wind tunnel results and we don't know about fuel regulations. We love the simplicity of the mission—drive fast and finish first.

In this part of Paul's letter, he is reminding the Galatians of the simplicity of their mission. It goes back to Abraham. Before the rules, the Law, the dietary restrictions and ritual practices. There was a promise and a mission that God gave Abraham.

*"I will bless those who bless you, those who curse you I will curse; all the families of the earth will be blessed because of you."
(Genesis 12:2-3)*

This was the start of humanity's relationship with God. Paul reminded the Galatians that this is the purpose of following Christ—to join in the promise that was made to Abraham. The promise of God was to bless Abraham so that all of the families of the earth would be blessed. This purpose, as far as Paul was concerned, was now being fulfilled in Christ.

The Law helped the people get there, but the Law wasn't the purpose. Paul was arguing with opponents who insisted on following the Law, but Paul argued that following the Law wasn't the point. The point was to be a blessing to all of the families of the Earth. The Law wasn't needed to get there, only Christ was. He wanted to remind them of why they fell in love with Christ to start with. They didn't fall in love with Christ because he followed the Law perfectly. They fell in love with Christ because he transformed their lives.

Like my family falling in love with F1. We didn't fall in love with the teams that follow the rules. We fell in love with the stories, the drama, and the competition. We love the simplicity of the mission. The beauty of a relationship with Christ is the simplicity of the mission.

At the end of this passage Paul reminds them of the simplicity of their mission. He quotes to them the creed that was probably recited by all at the time of their baptism. We find in Galatians 3:27-29 a poetic verse that was not original to Paul. It was probably a creed that went back farther than him. In a world where divisions of race, class, and gender dominated society, the radical equality of this creed was the heart of what it meant to follow Christ.

"There is neither Jew nor Greek; there is neither slave nor free; nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. Now if you belong to Christ, then indeed you are Abraham's descendants, heirs according to the promise."

This was the path toward blessing all of the families of the earth—to live in community that broke down the established social order. This radical vision of equality was the finish line that they were all pursuing. There could be rules along the way to get there, but this was the purpose: to bless all the families of the earth with a radical vision of love, abundance, and justice.

Paul reminded those who were getting caught up in the Law of what they signed up for. It wasn't about dietary laws, restrictions, and circumcision. They didn't find a rule book. They found a story that transformed their lives. They found a story that could form a radical community of equality. They may have forgotten their first creed. Paul wasn't going to let them forget.

Next Week: Heirs of God
Galatians 4:1-9