**Sermon Title: Old Testament Illustrations of Justification by Faith Alone, Part 4**

**Sermon Text: Romans 4:13-15**

**Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to a clear understanding of justification by faith alone.**

**Sermon Proposition: There are 3 aspects of faith alone apart from the law.**

**I. Justification is not through the law. V.13**

**II. Promises are not based on the law. V.14**

**III. Wrath is the result of the law. V.15**

**I. Justification is not through the law. V.13**

***For the promise***

God’s promise in Genesis 12:1-3 preceded the giving of the law by several centuries

(**cf Gal 3:17**).

Being “heir of the world” probably refers to “all peoples on earth” (**Gen 12:**3), “all nations” (**Gen 18:18**) and “all nations on the earth” (**Gen 22:18**).

***That he would be the***

In vv. 14-15 Paul has elaborated the negative point in v.13: the inheritance comes “not through law.”

***Was not to Abraham***

These promises of blessings are given to those to whom God has imputed righteousness, and this, Paul added once again by faith. Believers of all ages are “Abraham’s seed,” for they enjoy the same spiritual blessings (justification) which he enjoyed (Gal 3:29).

***Or to his seed through the law***

The law demanded obedience and performance. If the law was violated, wrath resulted. The law was not a system of grace.

God’s promise was one of grace. The promise to Abraham and his seed

**Galatians 3:16** Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. **17** And this I say, *that* the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. **18** For if the inheritance *is* of the law, *it is* no longer of promise; but God gave *it* to Abraham by promise.

Was not through the law but through faith, the righteousness that comes by faith.

***But through the righteousness of faith***

Paul now explains (for) why the promise cannot be attained “through the law”: if those who are of the law were heirs, faith would be emptied and the promise would be nullified.

**II. Promises are not based on the law. V.14**

***For if those who are of the law are heirs***

If the inheritance of the promise came by legal obedience, then the way of faith is empty. Furthermore, no one would inherit the promise since no one could keep the law. (vv.14-15)

***Faith is made void***

If Jews could become heirs by obeying the Law, then faith has no value (kekenotai, “it has been made empty”; cf the noun kenos, “empty without content,”) in

**1 Corinthians 15:10** But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain; but I labored more abundantly than they all, yet not I, but the grace of God *which was* with me.

***And the promise made of no effect***

Also the promise is worthless (katergetai: “has been made invalid”)

**III. Wrath is the result of the law. V.15**

***Because the law brings about wrath***

The reason this is true is because the law brings wrath (lit. “the law keeps on producing wrath”) as a consequence of disobedience. No one can keep the law fully, perfectly; therefore God, in wrath against sin, judges those who disobey. The law “produces wrath” – as opposed to what it cannot do – secure the inheritance. Paul is countering the very positive, and sometimes even salvific, function gives the law in Jewish theology.

***For where there is no law***

(**Rom 2:12-16; 2:1-29; 3:9-19**)

Violation of law turns “sin” into the more serious offence of “transgression” meriting God’s wrath. God gave the law to Jews. The Jews transgressed the law. The law brought wrath to the Jews.

***There is no transgression***

A general statement or principle, a person may still be sinning in his action, but if there is no command prohibiting it, then his action does not have the character of a transgression, an overstepping of a prohibition (**cf. Rom 5:13**).

Paul’s use of the word “transgression” rather than “sin” suggests that he is not thinking of the general condition of sin that justifies the infliction of God’s wrath, but the more specific situation that obtains wherever people are confronted with clearly defined, verbally transmitted laws and commands. For Paul does not use “transgression” as a synonym for “sin.” “Transgression” denotes a specific kind of sin, the “passing beyond” the limits set by a definite, positive law or command.

While every “transgression” is also “sin,” not every “sin” is a “transgression.”

Calvin quoted “He who is not instructed by the written law, when he sins, is not guilty of so great a transgression as he is who knowingly breaks and transgresses the law of God.”

The Mosaic law “produces” even more wrath; rather than rescuing people from the sentence of condemnation, it confirms their condemnation.

For by stating clearly, and in great detail, exactly what God requires of people, the law renders people even more accountable to God than they were without the law.

**(Rom 5:13-14; 7:7-12)**