**The “*Power”* Points is a teaching summary**

**from the classes of Grace Bible Church of PA**

**Taught by Pastor/Teacher Ed Rish**

**From Sunday, September 9, 2012**

**The Power of Faith in GOD**

We give thanks for the opportunity and privilege to have our souls filled with the qualities of virtue that are in our LORD and Savior. Paul wrote in ***Col. 1:19 For it was the Father’s good pleasure for all the fullness to dwell in Him.*** The fullness refers to the totality of every form of intrinsic good that comes from GOD. Believers today can have a measure of that intrinsic good and it comes through the Word. One of those qualities is faith. We’ve been talking a lot about faith and the reason is obvious. Without faith it is impossible to please GOD. Man cannot earn anything from GOD, it’s all by faith. Salvation is through grace by faith; spiritual growth is by grace through faith. The key is faith and faith is not blind, it has an object. Faith is not a thought; it’s a total reliance on the object, which sets the power of GOD in motion.

The object of salvation faith is the person of JESUS CHRIST. The object of faith for spiritual advance is Bible doctrine or the Word of CHRIST. In our current series we noted that trying to gain approbation from GOD makes faith void or meaningless. Many Jews thought they could attain salvation through the works of the law. If that were possible, since the law was given to the Jews only, then only the Jews would have the opportunity to be saved. But the reality is, GOD’s policy with man is grace and His grace to man is unlimited, but the only way to tap into grace is through faith.

In our current series in Paul’s letter to the Romans Paul tells us man is justified by faith in JESUS CHRIST and not the law. As we noted, the word *justified* means cleared of all wrong doing or declared not guilty. Justification is a judicial act handed down by a judge. GOD is the supreme judge in the universe and He is the only sovereign. GOD has all knowledge, He knows the beginning from the end and He has power and authority. GOD is eternal, He pre-existed in eternity past, and He is without end. GOD is perfect righteousness and justice, therefore only GOD can justify. Justify simply means man possesses divine righteousness or a righteousness that only GOD can give.

The pattern was established in Abraham approximately 4000 years ago when Abraham believed GOD and his faith was credited as righteousness. According to the dates and timelines in the NASB it appears that it happened around 2100 BC. At that time the Mosaic Law had not been given, so there was no system of works in place as of yet. The Old Testament had not been recorded and Abraham wasn’t given the command of circumcision until approximately 25+ years later. The Mosaic Law was given somewhere between 1445 BC and 1440 BC. The law was a conditional covenant, so it does not abrogate the unconditional covenant GOD previously made with Abraham. Based on all of that, the pattern of justification by faith stands.

In our series we see Paul using a series of rhetorical questions known as a debater’s technique where Paul asks a question the Jews might ask in response to Paul’s argument on justification by faith. In order to support his argument he answers his own question. Paul brings out the fact that Abraham’s faith had nothing to do with the Law. Look at Paul’s words in ***Rom. 4:13-15 For the promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith. For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified; for the Law brings about wrath, but where there is no law, there also is no violation.*** The word *promise* refers to the Abrahamic Covenant. In verse 12 Paul used the phrase, *of the circumcision*, which refers to believing Jews. Only believing Jews and not all Jews can inherit the promises. They, like Abraham, believed by faith. Verse 13 tells us the promise doesn’t come through the law but through righteousness by faith.

GOD said to Abraham in ***Gen 22:17-18 indeed I will greatly bless you, and I will greatly multiply your seed as the stars of the heavens and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your seed shall possess the gate of their enemies. In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.*** The last phrase, *because you have obeyed My voice* is the difference between Abraham’s spiritual descendants and his descendants by birth. The word obeyed implies faith. Abraham’s spiritual descendants placed their faith in JESUS CHRIST for salvation and these are the ones who will receive the promises. The promise to Abraham or to his descendants that he would be heir of the world was not through the Law, but through the righteousness of faith.

Then Paul writes in verse 14, *for if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.* This verse states that if heirs to the promises are through the law then faith is meaningless and the promises are cancelled. If that were true, it would change everything we know about GOD and completely destroy the dependability of GOD.

We’ve said in the past, faith activates the power of GOD in our lives, and faith only comes by hearing the Word, putting it into practice, and experiencing its power in our lives. Paul tells us in Galatians 3 the inheritance was given to Abraham through a promise, therefore the promise is given to everyone, whether Jew or Gentile, who receives righteousness by faith. So what we have in verse 14 is an erroneous assumption which brings about a false conclusion. *For if those who are of the Law are heirs, faith is made void and the promise is nullified.* If this were true then faith becomes meaningless and the promise is cancelled out. Why, because if you can receive something by working for it, you don’t need faith and the promise is no longer a promise it is something earned. But these Jews distorted the law into a system of self-righteousness and legalism.

Paul was confident that there were blessings in store for him in the eternal state, and so was Abraham. Why were they confident? GOD told them in scripture. But it was the LORD, the object of their faith that made good on the promise. The more we know about GOD, the greater our faith will become, and the greater our faith becomes, the greater our potential for GOD’s power to work in our lives becomes as well.