

February 21, 2018  
Lent Midweek 2  
Galatians 3:10-14

Who is in charge?

In a crisis, at a job, during a project, whenever a group of people looks to get something done, “Who is in charge?” is one of the top questions seeking an answer.

For Christians seeking salvation, this question is paramount, and it’s also where we tend to mess the whole thing up. Who is in charge?

In writing to the Galatian Church, St. Paul is addressing just this question as he explains who it is that really wears the mantle of “the children of Abraham.” The pious Jews who keep the law think they are in charge. They get circumcised. They observe the Sabbaths, festivals and sacrificial rites. As long as they do the good Jew thing, they are children of Abraham...children of God.

Paul says quite the opposite. *“For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.’”* No Jew can do all the law rightly. So even the best Jew is damned if he’s in charge.

Paul continues, *“Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for ‘The righteous shall live by faith.’ But the law is not of faith, rather ‘The one who does them shall live by them.’ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree’—so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”*

Basically, faith is trusting that Jesus Christ is in charge—that He took charge of our sin by becoming its curse and carrying it to His cross to die and leaving it dead in His tomb. Faith is knowing that all that need be done has been done and we can add nothing too it.

The passion account we have before us tonight helps in this respect. If you slow down and look at it, the narrative veritably screams that Jesus is calling all the shots—that He knows exactly what He's doing and nobody can stop Him.

The powers that be—the chief priests and the scribes—want to put Jesus to death on any day but one: “Not on the feast day, lest there be an uproar among the people.” But Jesus is the true Passover Lamb of sacrifice and He is in charge. He chooses to die on the feast day and He does. His plan, the Father's plan, is done according to His timing. Nobody else's voice or action can stop it.

Then there's the room. There's no question Jesus is in charge. He tells the disciples to go into the city, follow a man carrying water into a house and tell the guy the Master is keeping the Passover here. It is just as He says it is. Jesus is in charge.

Jesus intentionally does what nobody does, wash his disciples' feet, giving a great example of humility and service to all His followers to come, saying, “*A servant is not greater than his Lord.*” Jesus is the Lord, the one in charge. He order His followers to follow His example.

Jesus isn't even the victim of Judas' betrayal. He knows it is coming and actually gives Judas leave to proceed with it. “*What you are doing, do quickly.*”

Jesus is in charge and divinely institutes a meal of His body and blood for the forgiveness of sins that will convey God's grace to the church to be founded on His death and resurrection.

He is in charge and will be with His people until the end of the age. He cannot be stopped. He will not be stopped. He is doing what is necessary for our salvation.

Still, we struggle with this simple concept in just about every facet of life. In our relationships we forget who's in charge, continually thinking we're the one with the right to cast judgment on others, withhold love from the undeserving and not forgive the guilty. In our financial life, oh boy do we think we're in charge of our money, where it should go and when it should not be sacrificed. In our faith life we can't seem to resist twisting or obfuscating the clear leading of God's Word when our fallen desire leads a different direction.

Daily, but maybe especially in Lent Christians try to do better. We focus on repenting, turning away from our sin and being more faithful to Christ. But who's in charge of that?

Your life as a child of Abraham isn't like going to school or work. God's Law isn't like the rest of life where a task is placed in front of you and if you complete it you're a success, if you don't you're a failure. In such things you're in charge, and you're on the hook when things go awry.

Your life as a child of Abraham is one of having been declared to be so by Christ Himself. He's in charge. In your Holy Baptism you are declared His possession by the power of the Holy Spirit. You're not in charge of that.

In His Gospel Word made crystal clear in the absolution of sins they are forgiven "by His authority" because of His cross and empty tomb. He's in charge of that, not you.

In the Supper it's His body and blood doing the deed, making you righteous before God. He's in charge. He does it all. You've just receiving the fruits of His labor by faith.

Bring this truth into the rest of your life and it is easier to live in ways that are pleasing to Him, because you not only know He is in charge, you're happy He is in charge, you're

overjoyed! The good Law of God is not something you must keep to be righteous by your own authority and work. It is the will of God you aspire to walk within because God stands in charge in your accomplished salvation. You gladly seek His will because He is your friend and Savior, not a taskmaster waiting to pounce when you stumble. Jesus is in charge, and He is a great Lord, a good, good God, a fantastically gracious and merciful boss.

Jesus is in charge of your salvation and it's a done deal. Jesus is in charge of your eternal life, and because it's a done deal through the cross and grave, that eternal life is ongoing today.

We repent and believe that Jesus is in charge, because that's very, very good news.

Amen.