

God words...

- *(with kids)*
 - Get a load of **words to describe God**:
 - titles, names, descriptions...
 - see if mother comes up!
 - Quote Isaiah:
 - *As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you; and you will be comforted over Jerusalem.* (Isaiah 66:13)
 - *(image: mother and son)*
 - point out that God loves us like the best mother ever could
 - grateful for our own mums - treat them nice - but also glad that, at their best, they provide a picture of what God is like...
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What is a Christian?

- Ask that question - what do people believe?
 - someone who does good, obeys the 10 commandments, upright...

Bewitched? (vs.1-5)

- Taken in, deceived, not seeing clearly:
 - contrast being drawn
 - crucified is clearly more than just the fact of Jesus' death, but the implications of his death for our relationship with God!
 - **"receiving the Spirit"** is entering into relationship with God, when God's Spirit comes and dwells within us, and begins to empower us to live for him
 - implication is that God has done it all...
 - ...and it is received by **believing** not by **doing**
- Paul is clear: they had begun by believing - has something better come along?
 - better than attaining relationship with God?
 - better than being in-dwelt by God's Spirit, being adopted into his family...?
 - better than seeing God work in their midst, indeed working miracles?
- *Obedying the law, being good to please God, is human effort and will fail*

Consider Abraham.... (vs.6-9)

- Addressing a problem that was here present amongst the Jewish believers:
 - quoting Genesis...
 - *Abram believed the LORD, and he credited it to him as righteousness.* (Genesis 15:6)
 - Paul's point is that Abraham pre-dates the giving of the Law
 - Abraham couldn't have obeyed - the law wasn't given!
 - but he received righteousness!
 - how?
 - without precondition, even before the full covenant with God was entered into, before he was circumcised, before his name was changed from Abram to Abraham...
 - **credited** - given
 - and seen as a kind of forerunner of all of us - not just Jews (though he was father of the Jewish nation), but of all nations

Cursed! (vs.10-14)

- Emphasising the point, he again goes back to the Old Testament Scriptures:
 - *"Cursed is the man who does not uphold the words of this law by carrying them out."* (Deuteronomy 27:26)

- drawing out the contrast - cursed under the law, justified by faith, by believing, by God's gift

- Christ became the curse, took the curse, because we couldn't carry out everything the OT law prescribed!

Conclusion

- We receive the Spirit!
 - God living in us...
 - God empowering us for service...
 - by faith, not what we do