

## Galatians 3:10-26

### Law & Gospel – Part 1

Good morning church. Good to be with you this morning, as we continue our time of worship through the Word. I invite you to go ahead and turn to Galatians 3. For today and next week we're going to look at a longish section of the Scriptures. So bear with me, I'm going to read the whole thing – to get the context – and then this morning we'll look at about half of it, then next week the rest. Galatians 3:10-26.

#### READ Galatians 3:10-26

<sup>10</sup> For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, because it is written, **Everyone who does not do everything written in the book of the law is cursed.**<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>11</sup> Now it is clear that no one is justified before God by the law, because **the righteous will live by faith.**<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>12</sup> But the law is not based on faith; instead, **the one who does these things will live by them.**<sup>[k]</sup> <sup>13</sup> Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, because it is written, **Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.**<sup>[u]</sup> <sup>14</sup> The purpose was that the blessing of Abraham would come to the Gentiles by Christ Jesus, so that we could receive the promised Spirit through faith.

<sup>15</sup> Brothers and sisters, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will.<sup>[m]</sup> <sup>16</sup> Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, **and to your seed,**<sup>[u]</sup> who is Christ. <sup>17</sup> My point is this: The law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God<sup>[o]</sup> and thus cancel the promise. <sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise; but God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise.

#### The Purpose of the Law

<sup>19</sup> Why, then, was the law given? It was added for the sake of transgressions<sup>[p]</sup> until the Seed to whom the promise was made would come. The law was put into effect through angels by means of a mediator. <sup>20</sup> Now a mediator is not just for one person alone, but God is one. <sup>21</sup> Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if the law had been granted with the ability to give life, then righteousness would certainly be on the basis of the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin's power,<sup>[q]</sup> so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe.

<sup>23</sup> Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed. <sup>24</sup> The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. <sup>25</sup> But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian, <sup>26</sup> for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.

#### PRAY.

So the climactic point in this paragraph is in V26 – through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus. This entire section of the letter is building to that point. And it's a glorious point. And we really need to see this entire section together. Today though, we're going to focus in on V10-18.

Remember – context is key to helping us first understand and then apply these words. We have to remember why Paul was writing, and who he was writing to. Paul, writing to a group or network of churches that he'd planted, they had been infiltrated by false teachers.

**Kids...any of you remember why Paul was writing? What specific false teaching he was trying to address?**

Right. He was dealing with this HUGE issue that had presented itself, a distortion of the Gospel as we saw a few weeks ago, that said you have to become a good Jew, take the sign of Judaism, follow the entire Old Testament law, AND have faith in Jesus in order to be right before God. In essence, Jesus paid some, we pay the rest. And it's a lie. It's not true. It's the antithesis of the Gospel of God's grace that says we are saved by grace alone through faith. Not of works.

Because, no single person has ever (other than Jesus) honored the entire law both in letter and in Spirit.

And while these false teachers wanted to claim a position as Abraham's sons, what we started to see last week and will continue through this morning, is that Abraham's sons are by faith. Faith in the promise of God – NOT the taking of a ceremonial sign and the keeping of the law. Abraham's sons are by faith.

And to build his case, Paul goes into this comparison between the Law of God and the Promise to Abraham – and he starts by quoting the Old Testament book of Deuteronomy – where God said the deal with the law, is all of nothing.

**I. Every Last Letter – All or Nothing**

**V10** Paul points them back to the law, he quotes the law in Deuteronomy 27, where he says you know guys, this is an all or nothing proposition. Said another way, to fail in one area is to fail the entire things.

**Illustration – Taking a pass/fail class in college**

Paul is assuming that every person has failed in the law. And this assumption is right. Every person to ever walk the planet has been a sinner, other than Jesus. Even the best of people, sinners. And the thing about sinners – they sin! If you want to prove – just go volunteer in a 1<sup>st</sup> grade class at school. Bring 12 Oreo cookies with you, and watch them fight for the cookies. You may have 1 or 2 kids that think about sharing, but they're all going to fight over those cookies. Because all people are sinners. And Paul knows it. Human experience proves it, Scripture testifies to it.

**And every one of us needs something more than a list of rules to follow – because we'll never be able to follow them perfectly.** If God were to give us a pass/fail exam, we'd all fail. And to look to your own work, to justify your position before God – you and I will all come out under the curse.

Because none of us are righteous.

That's how Paul is able to state so confidently that all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse.

**II. But there's a better way – FAITH!**

**Re-read V11-12**

There is a better way – FAITH! Believing God, taking God at His Word. That you and I can't ever do it on our own. But that Jesus can and has.

What Paul is asking in these verses, how I understand them – is **"What controls us?"** Are we trying to be a good little rule follower, making sure we're not as bad as "that guy"?

**Illustration – At a family funeral, one of the kids asked another family member...and the answer "because she was a good person." It's not true! Even your goodness isn't good enough. Hell will be filled with lots of**

**“good people” by our standards. Lots of generous people. Lots of honest people. Lots of good people will be in hell.**

There’s a better way – it’s faith in Jesus. To trust in Him completely, and follow Him obediently. A way that says each day, “Lord, help me to live my life today in a way that brings honor and glory to your name. Help me, by your Spirit, to trust your ways today.”

A better way that trusts in Him day by day, moment, by moment, rather than trusting in what we think we can do on our own.

### **III. Redeemed**

#### **Read V13-14**

Redeemed:

- The idea of being purchased/released. Would have been used in 1<sup>st</sup> century context of buying a slave’s freedom
- And here, Paul makes it clear – that Jesus alone has the resources to redeem us, to set us free, to pay the price for us

By becoming:

- If you are a Christian – if you have turned from your sin and are trusting in Jesus – you are trusting that He really did pay the price for your sin. He lived a life of perfect obedience. But willingly took on the curse of God on the cross.
  - According to the OT Law, and Jewish custom, someone that was killed under the law, his body would have been tied to a post as a visualization of bearing the curse.
- The promise of the Gospel though, is that you and I don’t have to bear the curse of God – Jesus took it in your place if you have believed in Him. And can I tell you, it should’ve been us.

But God, who is rich in mercy, as the Scripture says “made the one who knew no sin, to become sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God.” 2 Corinthians 5:21

The blessing of Abraham → being part of God’s family. The presence of God in your life, through faith.

So that we could receive the promise – The blessing of Abraham – the Holy Spirit of God. But the next question would have likely been – what about the law then? Doesn’t the law change things on us? The answer is a resounding NO! We’re going to go deeper next week into the proper use of the law, but for today – we need to see that God’s promise is UNCHANGING.

### **IV. God’s Promise is Unchanging**

In V15-18 Paul gives us this human illustration about the unchanging nature of God’s covenant.

Talking about a validated human will. Interestingly, in ancient Greek law, once a will was signed and affirmed, it couldn’t be changed. Even if the person was still alive! Even we know, once a person dies, their will can’t be changed.

And the point Paul’s trying to make with all of this is that the law never changes the promise, because God’s promises are unchanging. Where the law says do this, do this, do this. The promise says “I (meaning God)

will, I will, I will.” And God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise – and to all who like Abraham, will have faith in Jesus.

**So what?**

**Glad you asked. While I don't think anyone is going to try and come into our church and try and weigh us down by the ceremonial, ritual laws of Judaism. There is a far more subtle way that this can creep in.**

**Some of the warning signs:**

- **We start to exalt ourselves. We think we're something.**
- **We start to minimize the priority of spiritual disciplines.**
- **We start playing the comparison game.**
- **We forget what Jesus has saved us from, and what Jesus has saved us for**
- **We put our selfish desires at the center of our lives, rather than the purpose and work of God in the center, allowing our desires to be fueled by God's purposes**

**Examine your heart regularly. Own your mistakes. Be a consistent repenter. Don't do it alone – we all need people. Point all praise, glory and honor to King Jesus.**