

## **Grace to You :: *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time***

### **The Purpose of the Law**

Scripture: Galatians 3

Code: 80-178

#### The Purpose of the Law

I decided to be merciful to you this morning. You have endured so many messages on Paul's interaction with the false teachers that I just thought we'd take a break from that this morning. I don't want you to get bored with the theme and I don't want you to feel like I'm going too slowly. I have to kind of work my way through it at the that the Scripture allows me to that. But I did think it would be good for us to take a break. And that's why I want to draw your attention this morning to Galatians chapter 3. We've been talking about Paul and his ministry and it's all been very practical and very helpful to me and I know to you as well. But I want, if I might, this morning to really be theological. I want to give you a handle on this third chapter of Galatians, which is of doctrinal importance. It has tremendous practical implications, as you will see, but it's a profoundly doctrinal chapter.

If I can sort of guess, I would imagine that as I was reading through this third chapter in our Scripture reading, some of it grabbed your heart and mind and some of it you missed. Most likely, you had the thought, I wonder what that means at some point or at several points. Or you perhaps thought to yourself, I'm sure I'm not following the flow here very well. I don't know that I can understand the character of this argument too well, but you dutifully listened as I read.

Now, I don't want to chastise you, but I want to just remind you of something. You know a lot more than the Galatians did who received this in the first place. They were young in the faith. They had very little background. For the most part, they would've been Gentiles with little comprehension of the Abrahamic Covenant or the Mosaic Covenant or the history of the Old Testament. They would've been newer in the faith than most of you. But it is probably true that they perhaps were skilled at thinking things through in a way that our society today, because it's been entertained to death, has not. We do find it difficult to stay with the flow of intricate, carefully thought out argument. That really is not the commentary on the difficulty of the text or on the lack of clarity of the writer as much as it is on what we're use to and not use to. This chapter needs to be understood, and it needs to be understood not only for the sake of understanding, but for the sake of its affect on ministry and how we do what God has called us to do.

Let's put it in the framework of the culture in which we live. If we were to define this culture that we're to reach, I mean, we're here to reach this society. Otherwise, we might as well as even go to heaven. We're here evangelists, as witnesses, as ambassadors for Christ and to proclaim the Gospel. And it's

helpful for us to understand the character of the society we're attempting to reach.

So let's see if we can't just briefly and maybe with an oversimplification define the society around us. We'll use some terms that may be a bit familiar to you. First is the term Postmodernism. We're looking at a society that is engulfed in, at least philosophically, in what is being called Postmodernism. What that means is the commitment to the fact that there is no such thing as absolute truth. Modernism was basically defined as the search for truth. The scientific world, the pursuit of natural law, to try to understand the truth, the discerned truth, the discovered truth, the fine truth. The postmodern society says, well, we've been looking a long time; we haven't found it, so it isn't there. There's no such thing as absolute truth. Everything is relative and everything that we can seek for in life is little more than an existential experience of one's own determination and definition. So, Postmodernism says there's no truth. So, we're dealing with a society that is being sold the philosophy that there is no absolute truth.

Secondly, our today could be characterized by the term Moral Relativism. Moral Relativism. There is not only no truth, there is no authority. That is to say, there is no standard. There is no inviolable law. There is no one against whom we are being measured. There is no one who has dropped the plumb line and established the authority to which we must all answer. There is no standard. There is no authority. Every individual is his own personal authority and determiner of what is right or wrong for him.

Thirdly, we could characterize our society as caught up in dominating Personal Freedom. Personal freedom. And we can say that simply means no rules. Postmodernism says no truth. Moral Relativism says no authority. And Personal Freedom says no rules. And that is a very popular concept. It's even the logo for a chain of restaurant who markets themselves as the No Rules restaurant. I don't know what that has to do with food, but it may be a subtle modern approach to the personally freed society we live in to attract them to their restaurant. Personal Freedom says there are no rules; it doesn't matter. Nothing really matters. There are no guidelines except those which you yourself choose to adopt for your own life.

And the fourth characterizing term we could use to define our society is Humanistic Atheism, which means there is no judge. There is no judge. There is no truth, no authority, no rules and no judge. And that is the pervasive philosophy that is being sold to our society. We could technically address it as Post Modern Moral Relativism, Personal Freedom and Humanistic Atheism. Simply said, no truth, no authority, no rules and no judge. Bottom line: you have nothing to which you are accountable. There are no consequences for your behavior except those that are built into it, and you can choose to do whatever you want. You're in charge.

Now, on the other hand, we need to tell this society this: there is truth, there is an authority, there are rules, there is a judge, and every single one of you will answer to him. That's reality. And the

Christian message is directly in contradiction to the reigning philosophy of today. Now, as we approach this world in which we live that is caught in this postmodern morally relativistic pursuit of freedom with a concurrent Atheism that dismisses the idea of God and, therefore, the idea of accountability or judgment, how are we to address them? How are we to approach them? The church today, the contemporary church, is convinced that we need to tell them that Jesus will fix their life and fix their marriage and make them successful and make them feel better, and we need to kind of warm up to them and bump up their self esteem and elevate their comfort and make them like us and talk about nice things.

That's not what the Scripture advocates. The Scripture advocates that we must convince men and women, in every culture, in every society, that there is truth, there is authority, there are rules and there is a judge. And they must understand, to put it this way simply, law before they'll ever understand what? Grace. If ever there was a time for the proclamation of law and sin and the need for repentance and forgiveness, it is in this society. Sadly, it is at this very juncture in society when the church is largely abandoning that emphasis.

And that's why I want to draw you to Galatians 3. Now, we can't go through the whole chapter. I want to bounce around a little bit, in the section that I read, and I'm not going to be able to touch everything. But I hope to give you an understanding of how the law relates to the cross. If we're going to preach Christ and Him crucified, if we're going to evangelize this society, if we're going to reach out to them, we must understand the relationship of grace and law. The relationship of the cross to the law.

Now, let's start where we have to start. Salvation is by faith alone. We all affirm that. It is not by works, it is not by ceremonies, it is not by moral deeds, it is not by moral goodness, it is not by religious activities or being in the service of the church or carrying out religious ceremonies. Salvation is by faith alone. It is believing. It is simply by faith, whether you're talking about Abraham or whether you're talking about somebody today, salvation is and has always been by faith. We know that because Scripture makes that absolute clear over and over again. All the way back in the back of chapter 2, it says, "The just shall live by faith." Clear in the Old Testament. Romans chapter 4 tells us Abraham was saved by faith. This chapter tells us the very same thing. Abraham was blessed because of his faith. It tells us that in verse 6. He believed God. "And it was reckoned to him for righteousness." God imputed righteousness to account of Abraham because he believed God. Salvation has always been by faith, not works. Not by keeping the law, doing good works, religious deeds or ceremonies or anything else.

Now then, here's the question. And it's an important question. If it is true that salvation is by faith, not works, not keeping the law, then why did God give the law? And that is the question that we must answer, and that's the key question in this section. Look at verse 19. You find verse 19 about in the middle of the text that I read to you, and it focused on this critical question. Galatians 3:19, "Why the

law then?" If the law can't save you and if salvation is based on the promise and if the promise is granted by faith, why the law? In fact, if salvation was by faith and Abraham had faith and God, therefore, imputed to him righteousness, that is removed his sin and gave him righteousness, if that all happened by faith at the time of Abraham, why didn't Christ just come at the time of Abraham? He already had faith. Christ could've come then and offered the sacrifice then. Why did the law have to come? And why did there have to be a period of fifteen hundred years from the giving of the law till the coming of Christ when people lived under the law? If salvation is by faith, if righteousness is imputed to those who believe, and you can't get saved by the law, then why the law? That's the question.

Abraham had an inward faith; we know that. Why did he need an outward law? Abraham's faith was inwardly simple. The law was outwardly complex. Why make life difficult? Abraham's true sons, according to the section I just read you, are of faith. The law is of works. Why the law?

We might conclude that the law was whimsical. The law was kind of adlib or an afterthought by God, not really very important. Not so. Not so. God did not give the law whimsically. He did not give the law irrationally. He did not give the law with little thought or as an afterthought. He gave the law, not reluctantly; He gave the law solemnly. He gave the law purposely. And when He gave the law, He gave it in a very, very visible way with a rather immense and shocking set of attended circumstances that forever remark about its importance. What do I mean? When God gave the law on Mount Sinai, you remember there was thunder, there was lightning, there was earth quaking and there was a trumpet blast as the very angels of God brought the law down. The people were told not even to go near the mountain which they could see burning with fire and smoke and shaking.

Now as important as the Abrahamic Covenant was 430 years before the law was given, it was a very private affair. It was not a public thing. Abraham believed God. God came to Abraham in Genesis 12, made a promise, very personally to Abraham, and it was given to him and to him alone in a very private encounter between he and God. Later on in the Book of Genesis, God put Abraham asleep and while he was sleeping, God Himself sealed the covenant by passing through the dead bodies. And so it was only God who was there in the sealing of that unconditional covenant to Abraham. It was not a publicly manifested covenant with awful lot of external fanfare, but the Mosaic Covenant was. So, it is not an afterthought, it is not something insignificant. It is a solemn covenant attended by some phenomenon to indicate its importance. God put in place 430 years after Abraham and kept it there for fifteen hundred years while men languished, as it were, under the imposing power and curse of the law.

There must've been a very strong reason for it. And here it is. And I'm just summing it up for you. Here is why then the law. Verse 19 says, "Why did God give the law?" Here's the reason. "To develop a great expectation and necessity for the Redeemer." "To develop a great expectation and necessity for the Redeemer by revealing human sinfulness to the degree that it would create the

desperation in men that drives them to the Savior." That's a very important statement. "To develop the necessity and a great expectation for the Redeemer by revealing human sinfulness to the degree that it would create the desperation in men that drives them to the Savior." That's the reason for the law.

The law then was very important. Yes, Abraham had faith, but Abraham was only one man and there were assorted others who had faith, but there was no great dominating entity in itself that could drive men in general to the need of a savior. Abraham had faith because God came into his life personally and worked in his life in such a way as to elicit that faith. God came into the life of Noah, who found grace with the Lord because of his faith and worked in a very personal way in Noah's life to bring him to the place of faith. And of course, through the lives of the patriarchs, etc. But there was no great pervasive standard that could drive men to faith in God and drive them to the need of a Redeemer. And that's why God gave the law. It went way beyond the personal intervention of God in the life of an individual like Abraham.

Now, as we look at this chapter and come to a better and richer understanding of the reason for the law, I want you to look at just three aspects: past, future, and present. The law as viewed from a past perspective, the law as viewed from a future perspective, and the law as viewed from a present perspective. Now, I told you, this is going to be a theological study but it's going to yield some wonderfully practical truth for you.

Let's start with the past. Go back to verse 19. There's a key word here that indicates the past to us. Here it comes. "Why the law then? It was added because of transgressions having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator." It was - here's the key word - added. The law as addition. In relation to the past, the law is addition.

Now, here's what we're wanting you to understand. In no sense the Mosaic Law, the Mosaic Covenant, set aside the covenant with Abraham. It simply was added to it. It completed it. It was, verse 19 says, "added." Verse 17 says it was, "added four hundred and thirty years later." And verse 17 says, look at it, "It does not invalidate a covenant previously ratified by God so as to nullify the promise." And I know when you study the Bible, you might ask the question, the Abrahamic Covenant comes in Genesis 12 and you get over to Exodus chapter 20, and here comes the Mosaic Covenant four hundred and thirty years later. Does that eliminate the Abrahamic Covenant? Does it invalidate it? No. Now there are two covenants in place.

The covenant with Abraham was fundamental. Let me give it to you very simply. Here's what it was. God promised to bless. That's that covenant with Abraham. God said, "I'll bless you, I'll bless your seed and through them, I'll bless the nations of the Earth." Right? It was a covenant of blessing. It was God promising, "I will bless." That was the Abrahamic Covenant. In other words, it's a promise of salvation. It was the promise that God would bring salvation blessing to Abraham, to his seed, and

through his seed, the Messiah to the nations of the world. That's why it was the promise of salvation. It was the promise of blessing. That's why when Paul was teaching the Doctrine of Justification, whenever he taught about justification or salvation, he never went back to the Mosaic Covenant, he always went back to the Abrahamic Covenant. He always went back not to Moses, but to Abraham.

Verse 6, "Abraham believed God. It was reckoned to him as righteousness." Verse 7, "Therefore, be sure that it is those who are faith who are sons of Abraham." When we're justified by faith, we come, as it were, spiritually in the line of Abraham who was saved also by faith. Verse 9, "So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham."

Nobody, folks, in the Bible anywhere is blessed with Moses. Abraham brought blessing. Moses brought what? Cursing. The Abrahamic Covenant said, "I will bless." The Mosaic Covenant said, "I will curse." Here is my law and you can't keep it and I'll curse you for that. The addition of the Mosaic Covenant does not void the Abrahamic Covenant in any way. It doesn't alter it. It doesn't change it. In fact, verse 14 says, that "those who are in Christ Jesus receive the blessing of Abraham." When you're coming in Christ to receive salvation, you are receiving the very thing God was promising to Abraham. At the very outset of redemptive history, God promised salvation, and He promised it to Abraham through his loins because born to Abraham would be a Savior. That's why in the genealogy of Jesus, in Matthew 1, it Son of Abraham. "Through the loins of Abraham would come a Savior through whom salvation would come to Abraham and to all of Abraham's seed who believe and to all in all the nations who believe." That's the promise of salvation made to Abraham. So, when you are in Christ, you then participate in the salvation promise originally given to Abraham.

That promise was not set aside by the Mosaic Covenant. You say, then, why did God give the Mosaic Covenant. Simply, a very clear reason, because the Abrahamic Covenant lacked a sufficient universal emphasis on man's sinfulness. Okay? The Abrahamic Covenant lacked a universal emphasis on man's sinfulness. There isn't really a discussion about that in Genesis 12:1-3 where the Abrahamic Covenant is given. So God says, "I promise you salvation." Period. And really there's no alternative except to say, God says, "Anybody who harms you, I'll harm." But there's really not anything to sort of motivate people. Well, you say, Abraham was motivated. He was motivated because of God's direct involvement in his life. Yes, but where is that universal law that calls the whole world to the reality of the fact that they are cursed by the violation of God's law and desperately in need of a redeemer and a salvation? So in the Abrahamic Covenant, God says, "I will bless." And in the Mosaic Covenant, God says, "I will curse." In the Abrahamic Covenant, God says, "I will..." and in the Mosaic Covenant, God says, "You better..." in the Abrahamic Covenant, you have promise; in the Mosaic Covenant, you have threat.

There was nothing universally thorough in the Abrahamic Covenant to unfold man's lost condition and incapacity for self-redemption. And, folks, that is essential knowledge for understanding the meaning of the sacrifice of Christ. Though I'm sure Abraham in his heart understood it, there's nothing in the

Covenant that really brings the curse down on man. So, he understands that he is damned before God, and therefore, desperately in need of forgiveness, desperately in need of someone to die in his place and someone to provide for him a righteousness he doesn't have on his own. And those are the things that Christ did, right?

So in order to grasp the significance of Christ bearing the curse for the sinner and giving the sinner His righteousness, in order to understand that, we have to understand the curse. So the Abrahamic Covenant had to be supplemented with the Mosaic Covenant in order that men might understand, listen, that there is combination of things that operate in salvation. Faith and repentance. Faith and repentance.

You have a lot people running around today saying, "I believe in God, I believe in God." You have a lot of Jewish who believe in God and they would even affirm they believe in the God of the Old Testament. The question is whether or not they have repented of their sin. And that's the balance element of true saving faith. And that repentance now is connected with an understanding of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ on the cross.

So the whole, really, Old Testament revelation of salvation divides into sections: The Covenant of Promise with Abraham and the Covenant of Law with Moses. The whole Old Testament is blessing and cursing, blessing and cursing, blessing and cursing, isn't it? The first is positive; the second is negative. When you come to Christ, you come with faith in Him as Lord and God and Redeemer and Savior. That's positive. And you come negative with a terrible brokenness and a contrite heart and a sense of guilt and wickedness and sin in repentance. That's negative. With the Covenant of Abraham, there is life. This chapter points that out. With the Covenant of Moses, there is death. There is death.

"The law," verse 21 says, "Can't impart life." According to Corinthian II, verses 6 and 7, "The law kills." Paul calls it the Ministry of Death in letters engraved on stones. The Mosaic Covenant then - listen to this, this is an interesting thought - the Mosaic Covenant then reaches its apex in the crucifixion. "As Christ," look at it, verse 13, "Becomes a curse for us." As He goes to the cross and take the full fury of God's wrath on our sin. The pinnacle, the summit of the Mosaic Covenant is the crucifixion of Jesus Christ as He becomes a curse for us, dying on the cross, feeling the wrath of God for our sin. The summit of the Abrahamic Covenant comes in the resurrection, because the promise of the resurrection was that we would be blessed, and that we would receive life. We received death, dying in Christ on the cross. We received life rising to walk with Him in newness of life. The Mosaic Covenant then reaches its summit in the execution of Jesus Christ, and the Abrahamic Covenant reaches its summit in the resurrection of Jesus Christ as we enter into the fullness of promise. Faith is emphasized in Abraham and repentance is emphasized in Moses. That's why Mark 1:15 begins the Gospel, "Repent and believe."

So we say then, the law, as it looks to the past, is seen as an addition. As an addition. It doesn't eliminate the Abrahamic Covenant. It is added to it that there might be a full understanding of blessing and cursing to drive one to the God who will receive our faith and repentance and save us.

Let's look secondly at the law with a future perspective. The law in view of the past is addition. The law in view of the future is insertion. Insertion. Verse 19, go back to it again. You see there in the beginning of the verse, it was added. Well, look at the end of the verse. It was "added" - we'll skip the middle part - "until." There's the second key word. If you want to underline those two words, you'll be able to remember this outline. The law as added and the law as until. It was added in regard to the past. It is addition. In regard to the future, it is insertion. The word "until" means it has a limit. It has a time limit on it. It's not permanent. It is not forever. It is transitory, and it is temporary.

In fact, it says it was only added, "Until the seed should come." Go back to verse 16, end of the verse. "The seed is Christ." The whole Mosaic Law with all its ceremonies and its rituals and its priesthood and its sacrifices and all that stuff, was inserted only until. Paul calls it a "shadow." And Christ is the substance. Until indicates that the law, in Mosaic form, is transitory and temporary. The law stands to the seed, who is Christ, in a preparation relationship. The law looks toward Him and it points toward Him and its fulfillment is in Him. And when I'm talking about that, I'm talking about the ceremonial aspects of the law. All the sacrificial systems, all the priesthood, all the new moons, all the feasts, all the festivals, all of those things \_\_\_\_\_ toward Christ. He was the fulfillment of all of those pictures and types and symbols.

That's why Romans 10:4 says, "Christ is the end of the law." Christ is the end of the law. He came to fulfill it all, he said. Even at the time of the old covenant, even when the Law of Moses was still in place, Jeremiah said there would be a new covenant, and the new covenant replaces that old Mosaic Covenant with its externals. David the Prophet foretold an "eternal priesthood for the Messiah," in Psalm 110 verse 4. "There's coming a different priesthood." Now, listen carefully. So the Old Testament saw a coming new covenant that would end the old Mosaic Covenant of law, and the Old Testament also saw a new priesthood. The priesthood had already literally been transferred from the tribe of Levi to Judah, according to 1 Chronicles 5. The priesthood had transferred from, as it were, Aaron to the Levites to Judah, and there would come in the end a complete transfer of the priesthood to One who would come who was a priest after the order of Melchizedek, a priest unto himself, that is, the Lord Jesus Christ, and he would bring in a brand new priesthood.

In Hebrews chapter 7, just to note this, there's a lot of Scriptures I could put in. We don't have time. Hebrews 7 verse 12, "When a priesthood is changed of necessity, there takes place a change of the law also." When you get a new priest, you get a whole new law. So the whole external ceremonial system including the priesthood and everything was over when Christ came and died. That's why at



the death of Christ, the veil in the temple is ripped from the top to the bottom. Right? And the Holy of Holies is thrown wide open. The sacrificial system is over. Access to God is readily available for anyone. No more Day of Atonement is necessary. No more Passover celebrations are necessary. You can transfer that, you can transform that into the Lord's Table in remembrance of the cross. The old priesthood is gone. Christ is the Priest of a new priesthood. And the law is gone as to its ceremonial aspects, its external aspects. With the changing of the priesthood came the changing of the law. So, the law then, the Mosaic Law, as to the past is addition. As to the future, it is insertion. That is to say, it is temporary, moving up to a future time when it is fulfilled. And that was the time when Christ came. And that is very, very clear in this passage, that it was added only "until" verse 19 "the seed should come." And that's why when Jesus came, the law was over. The ceremonies were over. The rituals were over. The priesthood was over. The whole thing was over. And in 70 A.D., the Gentiles came in and destroyed the city of Jerusalem and there has never since been a sacrificial system or a priesthood in Israel and there doesn't need to be because it isn't in God's economy. It was, with regard to the future, only a temporary insertion.

Now that brings us to the present. How do we view the law in the present? In the past, it is addition. As to the future, it is insertion. As to the present, it is instruction. It is instruction. You say, well, if the whole ceremonial law is now set aside, what's left? What left is God and God's moral standards haven't changed. They were true before Abraham, they were true in the four hundred and thirty years between Abraham and Moses, and they're still true. But, of course, we have the benefit of all of them being written down for us, not only in the pages of the Old Testament where God's moral law is clearly indicated, but repeated and repeated and repeated over and over in the pages of the New Testament. And the law is now given to us for some very important reasons.

Look at verse 21. Is the law contrary to the promises of God? No. It's added and serves well. May it never be, for if the law had been given which is able to impart life, then righteous would indeed have been based on law. The law couldn't impart life. All it could do is kill and all it could do is curse. But the Scripture has shut up all men under sin. Here's the first thing the law does. It teaches us that we are sinful. It's very important that men understand their condition. And while the ceremonial aspect of the law has been set aside because it was uniquely identified with Israel.

I don't think people quite always understand that, but that is very important to understand, that when God gave the Old Testament law, He gave it to Israel. Psalm 147 - I'm just going to comment on this; don't turn to it. Verses 19 and 20, "He declares His word to Jacob, His statutes and His ordinances to Israel. He has not dealt thus with any nation; And as for His ordinances, they have not known them." When God gave the whole Mosaic economy, He gave it to Israel to act as a hedge, to separate from the nations and the world around them, to act as a bridle as it were, to restrain and control their behavior, to act as a barrier to keep them from easy intercourse with the world around them. But mostly, the moral aspect of His law, which we're talking about now, was given to show them and us, because the moral law is still in place because God is still God, it acts as a mirror. According to

James 1, it is "a mirror." This is the chief task of the law. It shows us our sin. Verse 22. The Scripture has shut up all men under sin.

When you read the Word of God, you find there is a standard there and you look at the standard and your life, and you recognize you fall short. Romans 3 says, "It stops every mouth and makes the whole world guilty." The ceremonial part of the law, gone. The moral part, which is the revelation of the character of God which has always been true, in all eras of redemptive history, is still in place and it is now clearly given to us on the pages of the Old Testament and the New Testament. We know God's moral and religious and spiritual standards, and we also, in knowing those standards, become guilty before them. The law as we face it becomes a mirror. Back in verse 10, we realize we've broken it and we are cursed.

That's our condition. We have missed the mark. The New Testament says we can't hit it because we're blind. How can you hit a target if you're blind? You can't hit God's standard because you can't see it. You're blind. Your conscious is deceived. Your mind is blinded. You are ignorant. You can't know the things of God. They are spiritually discerned. You're spiritually dead. Your ignorance is both an unwitting error and a willful rebellion. You are as a sinner held up against the standard of God's law, and you look at your life and you say, "I don't do that," and you are, therefore, disobedient, lawless and a transgressor. Verse 19 says that's why the law came. It was added because of transgressions.

The law describes the ideal first, and then prescribes the ideal. It not only says, "This is God's standard," it says, "You must obey it." That does two things. First, that aggravates sin. Like a little kid walking down the road. Goes by the flowers and the little sign says Don't Step on the Flowers. He never had the thought, but once he saw the sign, he reaches over and stomps on them. The law has a way of just exacerbating a predisposition to iniquity by suggesting what is wrong. By suggesting what is evil, it excites our wicked fallen nature, and we, therefore, do things we might not have thought to do had we not known they were wrong. And they are offered to our wicked appetites as some delicious morsel heretofore not served to us because we didn't know it existed.

So the law comes, and the law reveals the standard of God. By definition, the law commands that we obey that standard. And as we view that standard, the law exacerbates our sinfulness. Paul in Romans 7 says, "When I got into the law of God, it just excited sin in me." It just revived sin in me. It just stirred sin up.

And then the law makes us feel guilty. That's its purpose. To show us God's standard, to demand that we keep it, to exacerbate our sinfulness so it's inescapable and then to make us feel the weight of shame and sin because of our condition. That's the function of the law. And in all those functions, verse 24, it becomes for us "a tutor" to lead us to whom? To Christ so that we may be justified by what? When you get a good look at the law, you know you can't save yourself, right? When you get

a good look at the law, you see God's perfect standard. You see that He's prescribed that you maintain that perfect standard. You see instead of keeping that perfect standard, you are excited to a greater and greater violation of it. You then feel heaps of guilt upon yourself and shame and remorse and anxiety for such a violation. You feel conviction. And as a result, you realize that through the law comes only cursing and, therefore, you are driven to Christ that you might be justified by what? By faith and faith alone.

Sin is clearly defined. Sin is basically excited or incited and guilt is produced, so that hopefully we come to the conclusion that we are exceedingly sinful.

In a culture like ours, committed to the fact there's no truth, no authority, no rules and no judge, there is a desperate need to understand there is truth, there is authority, there are rules, there is a judge. And it is time not to equivocate on law, but to preach law. It is a time to hold men accountable to the standard.

I read in the paper the other day that there is a movement of thirteen hundred clergy in the Methodist church to normalize and bless same sex marriages. How should that be addressed? It should be addressed for what it is - blatant disregard for the clearly revealed Law of God. And they should be called to account in the religious community for being heretics and apostates and blasphemers of Divine Truth who are in opposition to God himself. They should be called to account for that inequity. They should be called then to understand that they are under the curse of the law for that violation and all other violations and are desperately in need of repentance and an embracing of Jesus Christ through faith and faith alone. This is not a time to equivocate on the matter of law. This is not a time to equivocate on the matter of sin because it's unpopular. All the more reason to bring that into sharp clear focus.

The law then should make the standard clear in the present. It is instruction. Make the standard clear. Excite our wickedness so that it becomes clear to us, and we're not able to keep the law. Rather, the more we know about the law, the more we violate it, produce guilt and shame, which the Spirit of God working on can turn into conviction and repentance and drive us to the Savior, verse 24, "that we may be justified by faith." And how does that happen? Because as verse 13 says, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by being made a curse for us." God put Him on the cross, put His curse on Christ. Christ was cursed for your sins and my sins. He paid the penalty for your sins and my sins.

That's the Christian gospel, but it really doesn't have any meaning, and the cross can't even be understood unless you understand the law and the role that it plays. In the Old Testament, reconciliation with God was possible. There was a system of covering for sin. A sacrifice became an atonement, cathar, in the Hebrew. There was a covering for sin. Reconciliation was possible because of that, but the sacrifices couldn't take away sin. They were a temporary reprieve. They

were a covering. But they were symbols of an event to come that did take away sin, and that was the sacrifice of Jesus Christ, who, by the offering of Himself, took the curse of God and, therefore, satisfied the justice of God and provides free forgiveness and righteousness for all who believe in Him.

Even Abraham was saved by the sacrifice of Christ. Christ died for the sins of Abraham long after Abraham had lived and died. Christ dies for the sins of all those who, under the Mosaic economy, repented and believed. Christ died for the sins of those since as well as those before. The Old Testament coverings were symbols of the real taking away of sin that would come at Calvary.

So the Mosaic Covenant could not provide, and still can't provide, forgiveness. It was an addition to the Abrahamic Covenant, which is a covenant of promise of salvation. It was only added in its ceremonial aspect until Christ came who was the fulfillment of it. And it now exists in the present tense as instruction, not as means of salvation, but as instruction. And what does it instruct us about? About our sinfulness and acts as a tutor, a teacher, to drive us to the desperation and the necessity of a redeemer which brings us to the person of Jesus Christ.

And then verse 29 ends it all. "If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, bears according to the promise." The Abrahamic Covenant has never been set aside. It was the promise of salvation. And when you come to Christ, you enter into the promise of salvation blessing God gave to Abraham. And so I say to you, there is truth, there is absolute truth. There is an authority. And that authority is the eternal sovereign God. There are rules clearly given to us on the pages of Scripture, and for those who break them, there is judgment by the all-seeing, all-knowing Judge. And that judgment has eternal consequence to find, as eternal torment, eternal punishment in a place called Hell. And you can bear your own judgment if you choose, or you can acknowledge with repentance and faith the sacrifice of Christ for you and ask God to forgive your sins on the basis of the sacrifice of Jesus Christ and never be judge for Christ will have born your judgment.

That's the message we preach. And it doesn't have any sense to it if all we say is Jesus loves you and wants to fix your life. This is far more broad, sweeping than just that. There is blessing and there is cursing. Choose which one you desire. In the promise to Abraham, there is blessing fulfilled by the death of Jesus Christ. In the curse of Moses, there is judgment and damnation fulfilled by you forever. That's the choice. You take your own punishment or you acknowledge Christ as Savior and Lord, and He takes it for you. What fool would make the wrong choice?

Father, we thank you for this great portion of Scripture, this rich and profound sweeping look at the unfolding covenants. And though there is much more that could and should be said, we trust that this has been a profitable and helpful glimpse and reminder that we cannot become victimized by the mood of the mob, by the passing fancies and philosophies of our day. We have to confront the sinner with the reality that he or she is cursed for the violation of God's law and stands on the brink of eternal

judgment apart from faith and Jesus Christ. And where there is faith in Christ as Lord and Savior, Crucified Redeemer, true repentance, you bring absolute total forgiveness. Christ becomes the sin-bearer and repentant and believing one becomes the bearer of Christ's own righteousness. What a gift. We thank you for it. Who shall enjoy it forever. In Christ's name. Amen.

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