

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

Redeemed from the Curse of the Law

Scripture: Galatians 3:10-14

Code: 90-285

I want to talk to you about the great doctrine of divine redemption...divine redemption. Earlier when I read Psalm 19, you will remember the final statement of Psalm 19 is, "O Lord, our Rock and our Redeemer." Many places in the Psalms God is referred to as Redeemer. Psalm 78:35 calls Him the high God who is Israel's rock and Redeemer. It was Job who in the midst of his horrific situation said, "I know that my Redeemer lives." The writer of Proverbs identified God as a mighty Redeemer. Isaiah loved to refer to God as Redeemer and did so about a dozen times in his prophecy, calling Him the Redeemer, the Holy One. Jeremiah echoed the very words of the Psalmist, "Our Redeemer is strong," he wrote. And when we entered into our study in the gospel of Luke, we remember that the priest, Zacharias, who along with Elizabeth were the privileged parents of the forerunner of the Messiah, John the Baptist, when he found out that Messiah was in fact coming and that he would be the father of the forerunner of Messiah, he broke out in that amazing benedictus at the end of the first chapter of Luke in which he said the Messiah was coming to accomplish redemption for His people.

Even at the end of the gospel of Luke, redemption comes back to be a very important theme. He came to redeem Israel. The New Testament writers gather around this subject of redemption, certainly the Apostle Paul does, he wrote of our great God and Savior Christ Jesus who gave Himself for us that He might redeem us. Peter said we were not redeemed with silver and gold and precious stones, but with the precious blood of Jesus Christ, the unblemished and spotless Lamb. And when we look into the glories of heaven in the fifth chapter of Revelation, we'll do a little more later, we find that gathered around the throne of God are all the saints of the ages singing a new song of redemption. Romans talks about redemption and so does Corinthians and Colossians and Ephesians and the great epistle of Hebrews which presents the superiority of Christ presents Him as the one who redeemed sinners.

No consideration of great doctrine then could pass by the doctrine of redemption. It is at the heart of what salvation really is. It's not peripheral, it is core. We have been digging into the treasure of great doctrine. We started out backing, going, I guess in reverse, backing into these great doctrines from what would assume to be their logical order, we started with the perseverance of the saints, that is if you're saved it's forever. We then saw that our eternal salvation is predicated upon eternal election, the sovereign choice of God in eternity past. We saw that sovereign election and irresistible grace are necessary for salvation because of man's total depravity or absolute inability to save himself or make any contribution to his own salvation. We saw then that if God had predetermined who He

would save, if God had chosen to awaken certain sinners to salvation, it was for them that He provided in fact an actual atonement so that Jesus really died to pay in full the price for the sins of those who would believe.

We then looked at the doctrine of divine love. Behind it all God so loved. It is that divine love that led to that divine election. That divine election led to that drawing out of our absolute inability. That divine election led to providing an actual atonement which is, in fact, to be understood as a redemption of sinners. We have been redeemed. Ephesians chapter 1 tells us that God in love, verse 4, predestined us to adoption as sons through Jesus Christ, sons to Himself according to the kind intention of His will to the praise of the glory of His grace which He freely bestowed on us in the beloved, in Him we have redemption through His blood, the forgiveness of our trespasses according to the riches of His grace which He lavished upon us. You basically find elements of all those doctrines in just those few words...in love, He predestined, through His will He bestowed on us by grace the forgiveness of sin through the sacrifice of Christ in His blood which for us was the redemption price paid.

We have been delivered from the kingdom of darkness, Paul wrote to the Colossians, into the Kingdom of God's beloved Son in whom we have redemption. I can't count all the times redemption is referred to in the Old Testament, in the New Testament it is all over the place. It is a critical element of doctrine to understand and it takes us to the very heart of the gospel. If we're going to talk about what it is to know God, what it is to be saved from sin, what it is to be rescued from judgment, what it is to become a true believer, what it is to know and experience the love of God, we have to talk about redemption. And when you talk about redemption, it's all predicated on understanding the human condition. It is predicated on understanding man as guilty before God, under condemnation, under just judgment because he has incurred a debt to God by violation of His Law which he has no capacity on his own to pay. He is then sitting, as it were, in prison waiting for final damnation. His only hope is to be redeemed to have the price that he owes God paid by someone else. The debt removed by payment if he is to be delivered from judgment.

This certainly is an important doctrine from a biblical standpoint and ought to be at the forefront of all of our discussions of the gospel. And yet today the pop gospel gives little consideration to this immensely central truth of soteriology. As long as preachers leave out the issue of sin, the issue of guilt, the issue of eternal damnation, as long as they leave out those matters of debt incurred to God in violation of His Law which puts us under just retribution, as long as that is left out, then the doctrine of redemption is lost. And to lose an understanding of redemption then is in some ways to blaspheme God by stealing the glory that belonged to Him as our Redeemer. How can we sing, "Redeemed, how I love to proclaim it. Redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, Redeemed through His infinite mercy, His child and forever I am," with any meaning at all if we don't know what we're talking about? From what have we been redeemed? By whom unto what? Salvation has come in the

modern area...era, a kind of therapy, a kind of spiritual experience where Jesus makes nice people nicer and occasionally bad people nice, and good people better, and unhappy people happier, and purposeless people purposeful, and unfulfilled people fulfilled, and unsuccessful people successful, and discontent people content. That's the therapeutic view of salvation. That's not the biblical one. In the Bible, God is not a therapist, God is a Redeemer. People are not just unfulfilled. They don't just lack purpose. They're not just dysfunctional. They're under the just condemnation of God. They're on death row headed for a judgment that they deserve without the capability to change that. And the glory of the gospel is that God is a Redeemer who has provided redemption, payment in full, so that we can be bought back from judgment.

There are many passages that deal with this. Let me draw you to Galatians 3, this is the best, this is the simplest and most straightforward. Galatians chapter 3, I've been thinking about this for a long time, a lot lately. As you well know, I..I seem to be continually distressed by a lot of things that go on in the name of Christianity and one of them is the loss of this great understanding of the doctrine of redemption because we are so unwilling to paint the picture of the human condition truly accurately, biblically, because we want people to like us because we think it's important to be popular and winsome, we're not willing to really tell people the truth about their condition before God. And consequently salvation then becomes a very superficial thing and the heart of it is, we can't talk about redemption if we don't talk about desperation on the part of those who need to be redeemed. You know, as we're learning in the book of Luke, it wasn't that the people hated Jesus and killed Him because they hated the idea of heaven. It wasn't that they didn't like the idea of a Kingdom. It wasn't that they didn't like the ideas of miracles. It wasn't that they didn't like the idea of peace and joy. It wasn't that. That's not why they killed Jesus. It was that they would not accept the diagnosis of their condition. The Jews prided themselves on the fact that they were righteous before God and Jesus came along and told them the very opposite about themselves and that's why they killed Him. It's a so very unpopular message. The purest person whoever lived, the only sinless person who ever lived, the greatest communicator whoever lived, the most profound mind whoever lived, the greatest story teller whoever lived, the greatest motivator whoever lived, the one with the greatest insight into human need and human understanding whoever lived, the Lord Jesus Christ with all of those things going for Him could not...could not win popularity because what He said was unacceptable to a self-righteous world. And if people are going to understand the truth of the gospel, they've got to accept the diagnosis, then they can understand what redemption means, then they can give God the glory that He is due as the Redeemer.

Galatians 3:10, "For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse. For it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them, to do them. Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident for the righteous man shall live by faith. However, the Law is not of faith, on the contrary, he who practices them shall live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us, for it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree. In order that the blessing of Abraham might come to the

Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

My intention is not to get caught up in the details of this text, but to take a look at the big picture here. This is profound and this is at the heart of the issue of redemption. Let's look at the problem in verse 10.

"As many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse." Everybody who comes under the Law of God is cursed. And who is everybody? Everybody...everyone, all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. The Law acts in behalf of God upon every soul whoever lives. All are held accountable to that Law. Written in the heart, Paul says in Romans 2, if not known, written on stone or paper." And everyone under the Law is under a curse. Why? Quoting from Deuteronomy 27:26, "Cursed is everyone who doesn't abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them." Now this is the curse, the Law curses people. It curses everyone. Most people when they think about the Law of God, think about sort of a lofty noble ethical code summarized in the Ten Commandments, a good system to strive to live by, to adhere to, a somewhat elevated standard that we would like people to achieve though certainly not hard and fast if we sort of make a good run at it now and then and give it a shot, God will overlook our short falls. If we fail to obey, you know, God's going to be kind to us because we...we really tried.

In a sense, that's what the Jews believed. They believed that if they made a noble run at the Law and picked out a few things that they could now and then adhere to and things mostly external because on the outside when they were, you know, white, unpainted sepulchers, on the inside they were full of dead men's bones, they never could deal with the inside. No one can by the power of the Law. But they thought that they had accomplished at least enough of an interest in the Law and enough of an achievement in Law keeping that God would be satisfied with them and that they were pleasing to God and that they had possessed their own righteousness having achieved it through their attempt to keep the Law. In fact, the average Jewish rabbi at the time of Jesus believed that only the Vulgar, only the Amharits(???), the hoi-polloi, the common people who had neither knowledge or interest in the Law were actually under the curse. They limited the curse to only those who were indifferent to the Law. In fact, in the seventh chapter of John and the 49th verse, mockingly the leaders said, "This multitude which does not know the Law is cursed." For them knowing the Law and being able to articulate the nuances of the Law and the embellishments of the Law and fussing and fiddling with all the minutia of the Law, that was tantamount in their minds to satisfying the obligation of the Law. And it was only those who didn't know the Law or paid no attention to it, indifferent to it, who were under the curse. They certainly were not. Jesus turned that completely on its head. And Jesus came and condemned them all by the Law, and they killed Him for it.

Paul essentially does the same thing here in verse 10. "Cursed is everyone who doesn't abide by all things written in the book of the Law to perform them." You have to keep it all, you have to keep it all, all the time. And if you've broken it one time, you're under its curse. In Romans chapter 4 and verse 15 we find out the purpose of the Law. "The Law works wrath...the Law works wrath." The Law produces judgment. The Law brings a curse. Every person in the world is born in sin, therefore sins, therefore violates the Law, therefore is cursed, therefore is subject to eternal judgment. And that's how we all live. And verse 11 adds this note of hopelessness. "No one is justified by the Law before God...no one, absolutely no one." That should be evident because the Old Testament says, Habakkuk 2:4, "The righteous man shall live by...what?...by faith...by faith." and the next verse says, "The Law is not of faith. They're mutually exclusive." If you're going to live by Law, then you're going to live according to Leviticus 18:5, "He who practices them shall live by them." Okay, you want to achieve your own righteousness before God by the Law, then you're obligated to keep the Law. And, of course, you can't do that. There's no mingling. There's no mingling. The Law is not of faith.

I was reading this week a letter written by a pastor of a large Bible church to someone who questioned the fact that he said, "Mother Teresa was a true Christian who would be in heaven." And the person who heard him say that wrote a letter and said, "On what basis would you say that Mother Teresa would be in heaven since she affirms that salvation is a combination of faith and works?" And the letter which I read this week that the pastor wrote back was really pretty astounding. He said something like this and this isn't a direct quote but it is the gist of it, I read it over a number of times. "Surely you don't think God would send someone to hell just because they didn't get their soteriology right?" That's why people go to hell because they don't get their soteriology right. What connection does the Law have to faith? None. They're mutually exclusive. That's why the Reformation said loud and clear, "Salvation is *sola fide*, faith alone." The Law produces wrath.

And so what you see here then is the problem. The problem is, we're all cursed. The word "curse" in the Old Testament there, at least three Hebrew words for it, means devoted to damnation, devoted to destruction. The Greek word in the New Testament means the same thing, something doomed, something devoted to destruction, headed for judgment. We're all cursed who have violated the Law, even one time, and there's nothing we can do on our own to get out from under that curse. The only way we could ever be saved would be completely apart from law-keeping by faith. And at that point, we move from the problem to the provision in verse 13. "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law."

But I want to stop a minute, I want to expand this a little bit. I want you to understand what the curse of the Law is, okay? If you were to take the time, and you don't need to do it right now, to go back in to the Old Testament, you go back to Deuteronomy 28 when God lays out His promise of blessing and cursing. And basically God says in Deuteronomy 28 that if you break My Law, you're cursed. And this is what it's going to look like in your life, he writes, Deuteronomy 28, "The Lord will send on

you curses, confusion, frustration in all you do and undertake to do until you're destroyed and you perish quickly on account of the evil of your doings because you've forsaken Me. The Lord will smite you with consumption, fever, inflammation, fiery heat, drought, blasting, mildew. The Lord will cause you to be defeated before your enemies. You'll go out one way against them and flee seven ways before them. You'll be a horror to all the kingdoms of the earth, your body will be food for the birds of the air, the beasts of the earth. No one is going to be able to frighten them away. The Lord will smite you with madness, blindness, confusion of mind. You will grope at noonday as the blind grope in darkness. You shall betroth the wife and another man shall lie with her. Your sons and daughters shall be given to another people. It shall not be in your power to prevent it. You will be driven mad by the sight which your eyes will see. You will become a horror, a proverb, a byword. Curses shall come upon you, pursue you, overtake you and your descendants forever because you did not serve the Lord your God with joyfulness and gladness of heart." He goes on to say you'll experience hunger, thirst, nakedness, the want of all things. And then the horror of all horrors, and this occurred in the time of the terrible siege of Jerusalem, you shall eat the offspring of your own body, the flesh of your own sons and daughters. It goes on to talk about the most tender woman, tender, tender woman who would eat her own child before she would let somebody else eat the child because the famine conditions are so horrific when the judgment of God falls.

This is what's going to happen on cursed people, temporally in this world if you're not careful to do all the words of this Law which are written in this book and fear this glorious and awful name, the Lord your God. It doesn't exactly sound like God has a wonderful plan for your life, does it? God has a horrible plan, even temporally, he says, life is going to be horrific. And then eternally, you're going to suffer forever.

The Psalms are full of divine curses...full of them. It talks about God shattering the head of His enemies. It talks about punishment upon punishment, sevenfold retribution and vengeance. C.S. Lewis even said that in some of the Psalms the spirit of hatred strikes us in the face like heat from a furnace mouth. A man named R.N. Benson wrote a hymnal in 1901 called "War Songs of the Prince of Peace," and said there were no less than 39 Psalms that were war songs. God making war against sinners. One English study in 1974 concluded that 84 Psalms were not fit for Christians to sing. The prophet Nahum speaking about Gentiles said, "The Lord is a jealous God avenging, the Lord is avenging and wrathful. The Lord takes vengeance on His adversaries, keeps wrath for His enemies. Who can stand before His indignation? Who can endure the heat of His anger? His wrath is poured out like fire. The rocks are broken asunder by Him." Isaiah said, "The day of the Lord comes cruel with wrath and fierce anger." Romans 1 says that all of us have come under the wrath of God for our ungodliness and unrighteousness. Jesus said, "Depart, you cursed into eternal fire." Jesus cursed towns. Paul borrowing from Deuteronomy in Romans 12:19 says, "Vengeance is Mine, I will repay, says the Lord."

You see, the inability to keep the Law of God brings a massive curse on all people. And Jesus came and laid down that condition, they killed Him and then they killed the Apostles. And people are still being martyred for this message. You don't want to go the way of the Law, folks. You don't want to live that way. You don't want to try to be justified by the Law. You can't be. No one, it says again in verse 11, is justified by the Law before God, the righteous live by faith. You don't want to go the way of Law, the way of Law is not the way of faith. And if you're going to go the way of Law, then you've got to practice the Law perfectly.

Let me tell you a few things about the Law, okay? Because I don't think we can understand redemption if we don't understand the curse. And we can't understand the curse in its fullness unless we understand the character and work of the Law. So I'm going to give you some things to think about. If you want, you can jot them down. Number one, the Law requires behavior contrary to your nature. The Law requires behavior contrary to your nature. The Law of God asks you to do exactly what you don't want to do. Have you noticed? It is opposite your longings. It is opposite your lusts. It is opposite your desires. It is not the line of least resistance, it is the hard, hard way. It calls for you to love what you hate, and hate what you love. It calls for you to go against the grain of all your natural desires and that is undesirable. You have to desire what you don't desire, want what you don't want, love what you don't love, hate what you don't hate. The Law requires behavior contrary to human nature. So if you're going to try to live by the Law, you're going to have a serious battle your whole life trying to do what you don't want to do, what there's nothing in you that longs to do.

Secondly, the Law not only requires behavior contrary to your nature, it requires behavior that is impossible..impossible. It's not only against your will, it's against your ability. Even if somehow, somehow, somewhere by some means you could be motivated to want what is right in the truest sense, you couldn't do it. Could you wish it, you couldn't do it. You couldn't do holy things, your best, your righteousness is filthy rags. You can't think holy thoughts and speak holy words, there's not any of us who is good, there's not anything in us that's good and so here is the Law saying do this, and it's completely contrary to our nature, do this and it's not only contrary to our nature but we can't do it. That's simply illustrated by summing up the Law, "Love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, mind and strength and your neighbor as yourself." And we can't do that. Certainly the unregenerate cannot do that, but all the people who live in a legalistic system are kept under this Law and this bondage and they end up cursed because they're trying to do what they can't do and what they don't want to do.

Thirdly, the Law requires perfection...the Law requires perfection. The Law is a severe creditor, it demands perfect compliance. It demands nothing less than absolute perfection. It's not what we want, it's not possible. And the standard is way too high. Matthew 5:28, "Be ye perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect," that's the standard, okay? And it never, ever, ever relents. That's why it curses us. We're cursed because we're trying to do what we don't want to do, we're trying to do what

we can't do, and we're commanded to do it perfectly which is utterly beyond our possibilities. That's why we're cursed.

There's another one, four, the Law refuses to accept good intentions and effort as compensation. This is why the Jews missed it. They thought that their meager longings toward goodness, that their religious activities, that their efforts counted. Well, trying counts in some areas, but not in law keeping. Effort counts for nothing. Good intention counts for nothing. There's no consolation bracket in the Law.

Number five in my little list, why we're cursed under the Law, is the Law accepts no payback plan. Now there are a lot of people who think, "I know in the past I've been a bad person, but now I'm going to be a good person. I know I've done a lot of bad things, but now I'm going to do a lot of good things and maybe as I, you know, do good things, they'll cancel out bad things." No, the debt is never discounted. The debt is never negotiated. The debt of all your sin is never repaid. You can't atone. You can't atone by saying beads. You can't atone by lighting candles. You can't atone by flagellating yourself. You can't atone by praying, by genuflecting, you can't atone by ceremony. You can't atone by doing good things in a human sense. You cannot atone by any religious activity or ceremony. There is no way to wipe out one single sin of the past, none. In fact, if you were to break the Law of God once in your life and never again, the rest of your life doing what was right wouldn't cancel what was wrong and what was wrong would be enough to damn you. Or if you lived your whole life and kept the Law of God and broke it just before you died, all that accumulated merit would count for nothing. There's no payback and there's no prepayment.

Number six, the Law is an unrelenting task master. It never says take the weekend off and do what you want...never. It never eases up. It never lightens the load. That's why Paul said, "When I saw the Law of God as it was, I died, it just killed me, it slew me, it crushed me." It never relaxes its requirements. It never gives the sinner a moments rest. It is stringent on bending, on relenting.

Number seven, the Law destroys happiness. The Law destroys happiness. It's like a steal rod crushing a clay pot. It's like a hammer through a glass window. When you really come under the Law, it produces shame and guilt and remorse and sorrow and fear and pain and futility and hopelessness and restlessness and anxiety and depression. And when you really live under the Law and feel the true reality of the Law, there is no relief. That's why you find a Publican in a synagogue pounding his chest, what is that? That's the agony of unrelieved guilt. "God, be merciful to me a sinner." Why is he pounding? Why is he looking at the ground? Why won't he lift his head up? Because he is crushed under the oppressive and relentless weight of the Law. He has no joy, no peace, no happiness. He can't find any relief and so he beats himself in an act of contrition and pain, demonstrating physically what his heart feels, crying for God in mercy to relieve this relentless sorrow.

Number eight, the Law requires the severest penalty. The Law has only one penalty, hell forever. Everybody gets it. There's no parole. There's not time off for good behavior. And nobody gets a shorter sentence. You break the Law, you get eternal judgment.

What are we saying? The Law requires you to do what's against your nature. It requires you to do what you can't do. It requires you to do it perfectly. It refuses to accept any good intention or effort as compensation. It accepts no payback and no prepayment plan. It is an unrelenting task master. It shatters your happiness and your peace. It requires the severest penalty for everyone.

Let me turn a corner, here's another one. This would be number nine in my list, the Law demands but doesn't help. The Law demands but doesn't help. It offers you no strength. It offers you no power. It offers you no plan. It offers you no method. It offers you no assistance. It offers you nothing to help you. There's nothing in the Law to help you. And I have to add to that, it offers no salvation. It can't make you different. And it can't save you. There is no salvation in the Law. Salvation is by faith. Being just before God is by faith not by Law. So number eleven, the Law listens to no one's repentance. It doesn't care that you're pounding on your chest. Doesn't care that you're beating your breast. It doesn't care that you're depressed. It doesn't care that you're full of shame and guilt and remorse. It doesn't care that you've lost your joy and lost your peace. It doesn't care how penitent, how broken, how sorry, how sad you are, it does not respond. It is indifferent to all repentance. That's what's so sad, you know, you have these people who feel the weight of their sin, it's pounding down on them. They want to appease the God. In the Old Testament they go and burn up their baby, or they go offer an offering to a false god, or in some form through the history of mankind they do whatever they think is going to...is going to break the terrible pressure that they feel, or they go confess to a priest or somebody and they're told to go through a routine, some kind of legal action, some kind of ceremonial thing and somehow they're going to find in that freedom...and there's no freedom there. The Law and all the ceremony that goes with it listens to no one's repentance, has no compassion on anyone's grief.

Number twelve, the Law offers no forgiveness. There's no mercy in the Law and there's no grace, that's why it's Law. There is no mercy and there's no grace.

Therefore...next, there's no hope. There's no promise that it will get better, that tomorrow will be brighter. That the future will be less difficult. No, the future will be worse. The future is horrible and it lasts forever.

I don't think you want to live there, do you? Under the Law. I don't think you want to work your way to hell thinking you're working your way to heaven. But that's where all of us are. We're all under the weight of the crushing violation of the divine Law of God which renders us guilty before God and just

punishment and retribution needs to be meted out by a holy God. Our only hope is that somebody would rescue us. Our only hope is that someone would pay the debt we owe. Our only hope is that someone would pay the price. It can't be silver and gold, Peter said. And that's what brings us to verse 13. From the problem, to the provision. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law.

Can I go back and say it's not therapy, folks? It's redemption. He brought us out from under the curse. Verse 5 of Galatians 4, can you look at that for a minute? Galatians 4:5, just one chapter later, it says, "He redeemed those who were under the Law." He redeemed those who were under the Law. Christ redeemed us. Paul said to Timothy, "He is a ransom for us all." He said to Titus, "He gave Himself that He might redeem us." Now how did He do it? What was the price? Verse 13, "He redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us." Now you understand the death of Christ. He dies on the cross and pays your debt and my debt. Just a staggering reality.

It is at the heart of the Christian gospel, it's about redemption. He was cursed, analogous to the Old Testament statement back in Deuteronomy 21:23, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree." He became a curse for us. He took our punishment. That's the gospel. In Romans chapter 5, if there is a great statement about this, when we were still helpless, verse 6, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly. Notice that, "He died for the ungodly." He didn't die for the godly. There aren't any. He didn't die for the good law keepers. He died for the ungodly. One would hardly die for a righteous man, though perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us that while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. While we were yet sinners, Christ died for us. And we have been, verse 9 says, justified through His blood.

In Hebrews chapter 9 there are two statements about this that help us to see this. Hebrews chapter 9 verse 12, it says that, "Through His own blood He entered the holy place once for all, having obtained eternal redemption. A redemption that the blood of bulls and goats couldn't obtain." They just pictured the one who would die and satisfy God. "He obtained eternal redemption." Once you're redeemed, it's forever. And we're back to that great doctrine of perseverance where it all began. Down in verse 15, "He is the mediator of a New Covenant because through death He has brought about...verse 15...the redemption of the transgressions committed unto the first covenant." The first covenant talking about here is the Mosaic Law. We all violated it. We all transgressed it. So He died to pay the price to redeem us out from under the curse of the violation of the first covenant. In this new covenant is our redemption. He became a curse for us. Criminals sentenced to death under Mosaic Law were usually executed, not crucified. The Jews didn't crucify. But when they had executed a person, they would tie the dead body to a post and they would let that body be on display for others to see to cause fear. Tying someone then to a tree or a post was to show that this person had been cursed by God. Analogous to that Old Testament pattern was Christ being put on a tree, cursed by God for us. He became sin for us. He took our place that we might become the righteousness of God in Him. Look at Galatians 3:24, "The Law...and here's its good function...while

it works wrath, the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ that we may be justified by faith." The work of the Law is to produce wrath, but the work of the Law is to produce in the sinner the understanding of wrath and judgment and punishment and a curse that drives the sinner to Christ so that he can place his faith in Christ and be justified by that faith.

Now let's go back to Galatians 3 and close. What is the purpose of this? The problem, we're cursed. The provision, Christ. What's the purpose? Verse 14, it's a purpose clause here in the Greek, "In order that in Christ Jesus two things become ours, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles." What's that? What is the blessing that came to Abraham?

I'll tell you what it is. Romans 4 tells us the great blessing God gave to Abraham. "Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness." Abraham believed God and it was reckoned to him as righteousness, Genesis 15. What was the great gift that God gave Abraham? Righteousness. He removed the curse. Not through Abraham's works, but through Abraham's faith...through Abraham's faith. The same blessing of righteousness by faith comes to the Gentiles in Christ Jesus.

So the first purpose, the first blessing is justification by faith. We are made righteous. The curse is removed. The second, we receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. We didn't earn that either. The first thing we get is justification, second thing we get is sanctification. The first is salvation by faith, the second is the coming of the Holy Spirit who becomes the means of our sanctification. And what is the work of the Spirit? To produce in us a new heart, a new spirit, and a new love for the Law of God and a new desire to keep that Law. We are free from the penalty of the Law, we're not free from the obligation to obey God. Christ became a curse for us to buy us back from sin and damnation, to set us before Him as righteous and holy in position, and then to place His Spirit in us to progressively make us righteous and holy in practice. This is the gospel. This is the glory of redemption. And we rejoice in worshiping our God, the Holy One of Israel, our strength and our Redeemer.

Father, we thank you for the Word. Thank You for the truth of redemption. We embrace it with all our hearts. We treasure it as no other truth for in it we are rescued. We thank You for these glorious realities and may they be pressed to every heart. And now, Father, we are so thankful that though we are completely unworthy of redemption, You have nonetheless redeemed us. You have filled our hearts with grace and love. You have drawn us into this fellowship of believers. You have called us to service to reach the world with the glorious message of redemption. And may we worship You and out of that overflowing worship, may we proclaim the glory of the Redeemer, in whose name we pray. Amen.

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