

Faith, the Curse and the Promise

Passage: Galatians 3:7-14 | Speaker: Steve Grothoff | Date: 260906

SUMMARY

Preaching from Galatians 3 (reading 10-14 and 19-24), Steve works through three questions: what was the law, what is the gospel, and now what do we do about it. The law: after 400 years of slavery in Egypt, God gave Moses the Ten Commandments and then 600-plus more, for two reasons -- to give a people who'd never governed themselves a real societal structure, and to expose how far short of God's holiness everyone actually falls (cursed is everyone who does not continue in ALL things written in the law). The real bar was perfect, personal, perpetual obedience, which is exactly why nobody could clear it -- the law's job was to be a tutor pointing forward to Christ. The gospel: six verses of the Romans Road (Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 10:13, 5:1) laid out plainly -- we've all sinned, sin's wage is death but God's gift is eternal life, Christ died for us while we were still sinners, confessing and believing saves, whoever calls on the Lord is saved, and faith justifies us into peace with God. Jesus lived the law perfectly in our place, so we're clothed in his righteousness instead of our own. Now what: Steve's answer is discipleship, not a numbers game -- know your testimony (nobody can refute it), find your Paul (someone pouring into you), be a Timothy (someone you're pouring into), get a Barnabas (someone encouraging you), and be intentional about actually sharing Jesus with the people already in your life, especially the ones you'd normally sidestep.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

- The law was never the way to be made right with God -- it was there to give a recently-enslaved people a real societal structure, and to expose how far short of God's holiness everyone actually falls.
- Cursed is everyone who does not continue in ALL things written in the law -- the real bar was perfect, personal, perpetual obedience, which is exactly why nobody could clear it on their own.
- The gospel in six verses (the Romans Road: Romans 3:23, 6:23, 5:8, 10:9, 10:13, 5:1) -- we've all sinned, sin's wage is death but God's gift is eternal life, Christ died for us while we were still sinners, confessing and believing saves, whoever calls on the Lord is saved, and faith justifies us into peace with God.

- Jesus lived the law perfectly in our place, so faith in him clothes us in his righteousness instead of leaving us to earn our own.
- Everybody needs a Paul (someone pouring into you), a Timothy (someone you're pouring into), and a Barnabas (someone encouraging you) -- and the assignment this week is simple: be intentional, and actually tell somebody about Jesus.

Introduction

Good morning, everybody.

Mel, thank you for getting up here and tooting your own horn for us for a little bit.

As long as you do it for God, it's all right, right? All right, this morning we are going to be in Galatians again. We are in chapter 3. We are going to read through. I've got it wrong in the bulletin again. I told Becky one thing and then I changed my mind again. So we are going to be, we're going to be 10 through 14 and then we're going to skip down and we're going to do 19 through 24. So if you guys would like to stand with me, we will read through that and then we will dive right on in.

Scripture Reading: Galatians 3:10-14, 19-24

Galatians 3.10. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse, for it is written, cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no one is justified by the law and the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith. Yet the law is not of faith, but the man who does them shall live by them. Christ has 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. And the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Verse 19. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. And it was appointed through angels by the hand of the mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for only one, but God is one.

Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not. For if there had been a law given, which could have given life, truly righteousness would have come from the law. But the scripture has confined all under the sin, that the promise of faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who

believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore, the law was the tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under that tutor.

Father, we thank you for today.

Opening Prayer

Father, we thank you for your word. And Father, as we get into this, Father, we thank you that we are no longer under the law. Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son who has freed us from that. That as we'll get into, Father, that faith in Jesus is what is required from us. And from that spews out our obedience. That is where we become better. Our production of obedience is what matters. It is not what we do to become righteous. It is what we do because we have become righteous. So, Father, thank you. Thank you for the freedom that comes from that. And Father, just as we go through this, help us to understand what it is to be free. And then what it looks like for us once we have been saved by faith, what our job is from there on out to live for you.

Father, we thank you. Father, we thank you for the gift of your Son. And Father, we just, we can't thank you enough for that. And we ask all these things in his name. Amen.

All right.

Point 1: What Was the Law?

That was a lot of words and a lot of things that sound confusing. And so what I want to do today is I want to talk about what was the law. What is the law? What was the purpose of the law? And then we've talked a lot. You've heard me say the word gospel a lot. Paul talks about gospel a lot. What is the gospel? What is the gospel? What does that mean? What does that entail? So when I say we should go out and share the gospel, if you don't know what that looks like, it can be really easy to just say, well, I don't know what that is supposed to exactly look like. So I'm going to give us what the gospel is. And then I want to explain why exactly that supersedes what the law said. Why, how Jesus was, as it says there in verse 13, has redeemed us from the curse of the law. How? How did Jesus do that? What did Jesus do? So we'll get into that too. And then, like I said, number three, what should we be doing? Okay, we've, we realize we're not under the law anymore. We've heard the gospel. We've accepted the gospel. We've received the gospel. We now have Jesus.

Now what? Now what do we do? What's our job as Christians? What should we be doing as Christians to further the law or to further the gospel? Not the law. Don't further the law. To further the gospel. So, number one, what is the law? What was the law? Why did God give us the law? We go all the way back to creation. Go all the way back. Very, very beginning. We had one rule. And we ruined it. We had one rule. That's all. God said, go do what you're going to do. Don't eat from that tree. We had one law. And we broke it. It just shows that easy that it doesn't matter. There could, we could still only have one rule. There could still just be one rule. We would break it. We would do it. Now, go forward. After 400 years of being in slavery to Egypt, God gives Moses the Ten Commandments. Why did he give him the Ten Commandments? They were basic rules to live by. Then, immediately after he gave him the Ten Commandments, he gives him another 600 plus laws. There's over 600, close to 615, 620. Everybody kind of argues about some of them.

But what was the purpose? There were these laws that God established for society, for faith, and for atonement of sin. There were, God set up a system of rules, and he gave them these laws for two purposes. One, it was to establish a societal framework for a people who had recently been in slavery. They had been in slavery for 400 years. They didn't know how to rule themselves. They didn't know how to run a society. There, it was, you do what you're told or we'll kill you. That was essentially the rules that they had when they were in slavery. You do what you're supposed to do or we'll kill you. So, God helped them set up what society, what a structure, what a community was supposed to look like. That was why there were so many laws, and there are some of them that you read through when you read through Levitical law, and you're just like, well, that's common sense. Well, they needed that because, you know what? If it wasn't written down, they would have broke it. They broke it anyways. We read that often in Old Testament.

What was the second purpose of that law? It wasn't just for them.

The second purpose of that law, it established their need for God. It was establishing just how far from righteousness they were. This is what you, you cannot live up to what is needed to be faithful. Why is that? We went through the attributes of God study this last winter. For those of you that did that, if you remember the chapter on holy, God is holy. What the holiness of God looks like. How deep that is. What really that means. We use the word holy, and we flippantly use a word that is only supposed to be used for God. We say things like holy cow or other things.

That is a word that is attributed just to God. And what we need to understand about the word holy is that holy, by its nature, the word holy insists, and there cannot be sin in the presence of holiness. That is how absolutely monumental holiness is. God is holy. God cannot have sin in his presence. Therefore, guess what? Each and every one of us is a sinner. That's a great message for everybody. We're all sinners. We know that. The more we look at our lives and the closer we get to God, the more we realize just how much that is. Paul calls himself the chief of sinners often.

Verses 10 and 12 there, it says, Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things. All things. When the Bible says all, it means all things, all the time, every time. All. If you can't continue in every bit of the law, which is written in the book of the law, you need to do them. If it's, if it's written down in there, you need to do them consistently. That's why he says there in verse 12, the man who does them shall live by them. You'll live by them. This is what you are going to do. This will be your existence is making sure that you're following the law. That is what the law was set up. The law, life in the law requires perfect, personal and perpetual obedience to that law.

You will never be good enough in your own power to gain salvation. The law was set up for that. What God set up for them also, though, is what he says there in, in verse 19, when he says, it says, what is the purpose of the law? Till the seed should come to whom the promise was made. And then there in verse 22, the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 24, therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might live justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor. The law was put there to point them to Christ, to point people in the Old Testament to there is a Messiah coming. There will be somebody coming that will fix and will be the one who is righteous enough and will give you what you need for salvation. Having faith in that for the Old Testament people, that's why, which the verses we skipped over a little bit, I'm going to talk about those probably in Sunday school next week or in a Bible study next week. It's a boring sermon, so I'm not going to bore you guys with a boring sermon. If you guys are interested in some of that stuff, I want to cover that in Bible study Sunday night next week. But God established this with Abraham. Abraham didn't have Jesus. Abraham had a promise from God that said, hey, this is what's coming. If you can hold on to that faith and put your faith in that, you'll be saved.

Point 2: What Is the Gospel? (The Romans Road)

So what is the gospel?

And why does it supersede the law? Well, I'm going to give you guys six verses here. If you guys are familiar, it was not my own thinking. It's called Romans Road. I'm going to give you six verses that just very clearly and very distinctly give you what the gospel is.

The first verse is Romans 3.23. For all have sinned and fallen short of the glory of God.

We are the problem. Sin is the problem. We, this verse tells us that we have all sinned and we are all short of God's standard. Second verse is Romans 6.23. It says, for the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life through Christ Jesus. There we get what the consequences are, but we also get an introduction into what salvation looks like. Consequences of sin is death. This means eternal

separation from God. However, there is a solution there. Like I said, the gift of God, which is eternal life through Christ Jesus. So how do we get that? What is the solution? Romans 5.8. We get Christ's sacrifice, but God commanded his love towards us.

Commended, sorry. Commended his love towards us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. It doesn't matter. We are sinners. We will always be sinners. But God demonstrated that his love for us through Jesus for dying in our place, that is grace. That is the gospel of grace.

So what is our response? This is what most people call the gospel of faith. Romans 10.9 says that if you shall confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised him from the dead, you shall be saved.

Salvation comes from a faith in Jesus Christ.

Confessing him as Lord and believing in his resurrection. We've talked at length about that sacrifice. We've talked at length about what that looks like.

And we get the assurance. The assurance of that faith.

Romans 10.13. For whoever calls upon the name of the Lord shall be saved. It doesn't matter where you've been. It doesn't matter what you've done. It doesn't matter what kind of sin you feel like you have in your life. If you put your faith in Christ, you will be saved. So what comes from that? What's the result of that salvation?

Romans 5.1. Therefore, being justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. Our faith in Jesus justifies us. We are now righteous. So what does living in the Spirit look like? What does that entail? What comes after that? So we are saved. What comes after that?

Romans 8.1. Therefore, now there is no condemnation for them who are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. Our job, as Christians, is to walk in the Spirit. What does walking in the Spirit mean?

We'll get into that in a second. But why do we no longer need the law? Now, Jesus lived a perfect life, and according to the whole of the law, he lived, and he became a perfect sacrifice for our sin. He followed the law to the letter of it. So when we put our faith in him, we are no longer bound by the law of righteousness because we are imputed or spiritually filled with Christ's righteousness.

Point 3: Now What? Living Out the Gospel

So now what? We have Jesus. We have become Christians. We call ourselves Christians. Now what?

What do we do? What does that look like? We talked about that a little bit last week. What we should be doing as Christians. What does that entail? That entails us looking and striving for a deeper relationship with God, wanting to know more about God, wanting to spend more time in God's Word, more time in prayer, things like that. But then the one that I want us to focus on more than anything is when we start building that relationship, that should cause us to want to share it. That desire to share what we have in Christ should be evident in everything that we do, the way that we live. First Corinthians 15, Paul says, my first priority upon receiving the gospel was to share the gospel. He says, I've got the gospel and the first thing I want to do with it is I want to go and share it. And what the first part of that gospel is, is that Jesus died and was raised again. And because of that, and because of that, and my faith in that, I am saved.

It's easy sometimes to get complacent. As we become seasoned Christians, it's easy to sometimes become complacent. But I have two questions. If you feel like you've become complacent or if you don't think that you have been, just to kind of guess or give you something to think about and see exactly and assess where you are. Have you forgotten what Christ did for you? Have you forgotten what that freedom feels like? Do you remember what life was like before that and that weight that was lifted off? I have a guy that is one of my guys that I'm discipling. And he and I were talking the other day. And he recently got baptized and he was like, I knew I was saved, but the moment that I got baptized, he's like, I came up out of that water and there was a weight that was lifted off of me.

Do we remember what that feeling feels like? Do we remember what happened? And he told me, he said, I just want to tell everybody about it. Why do we, why do we lose that? Why is that something that we lose? It seems like that we, we lose it so quickly. We just don't want to, we, we, are we not excited to go tell people about Jesus anymore? Are we not excited to go share the gospel with people anymore?

And then it also becomes really easy to decide on our own who we think is worthy of hearing gospel.

We shouldn't discriminate the kind of people we're sharing Jesus with. There's an easy beginners group of people. And that's your own family members, people you've got relationships with already. That's great. That's great. Those are the kind of people that, that you need to be starting with. You need to be the people that are in your family or in your friend groups that aren't Christians or that are questioning or maybe that are being defiant against it. That should be each and every one of our mission fields. And that's not a half hour on a Sunday morning kind of thing. You can't, you can't preach that. You can, but I'm not that good.

I don't, I'm, I'm, and, and God hasn't given me that message. But you know what? Each and every one of us is building a relationship with somebody that we know. We know we are building a relationship with for the sole purpose that we should be sharing Jesus with them. You may not know that yet, but

you're building a relationship with somebody that you need to be sharing Jesus with. We each and every one should have a one more in our life. We each and every one should have somebody that we are expressly and intentionally going out into the world and saying, I'm telling you about Jesus and I'm going to do it in a way that I know will reach you best. Sometimes that's not sharing Jesus with them in word. That's sharing Jesus with them in action. And loving them through things that they are going through.

But then we also, it is, there are the more difficult people. There are the people in our lives that, we talked about it this morning in Sunday school. We talked about the, the, the, the good Samaritan. There are the people that we, we see in our world that, that we sidestep around. We know that they need help. We know that they need Jesus, but we look at him and we think, oh, that seems like way more of a project than I'm willing to take on right now. I'm not willing to deal with that. And we step around them. We sidestep them. Somebody mentioned walking through the grocery store and seeing somebody and being like, I don't need anything in that aisle right now. I'll go back when they're not there. We've all done it. We've all done it. I've done it.

But who are those people?

Every last person in this world is made in the image of God. Every last person in this world is his creation. And God loves each and every one of them, no matter how far from him they are in their life. But you might be that person that reaches them. You might be that person that reaches out to them and says something. They might look like the angriest, most disturbing person in the world. But you walking up to them and saying something or just being cordial to them. Sometimes people aren't used to that. We live in a world of, we are the most well-connected, lonely people in the world. We have connection with people everywhere, but we are lonelier than we have ever been. Because we don't have true connection with anybody. We don't have an actual personal relationship with anybody hardly anymore.

We need to be that person. We need to be the person that is going out and saying, listen, I don't know where you're at, but is there something bothering you? There was a lady at the gas station this morning. I could tell. I've met her numerous times, talked with her numerous times. And when I was there, I noticed that she wasn't quite as cheery and happy as usual. I said, everything okay? She's like, yeah, I just got some things going on. I was like, I mean, you don't have to tell me about it, but just know that I'll be praying for you.

It wasn't hard. It was easy.

But you know what? This lady that looked like she was on the verge of tears when I said something like that to her, she just smiled and said, thanks, that means a lot.

It wasn't difficult, guys. It's easy. Sometimes that's what it takes is just being cordial to somebody, being kind to somebody and being willing to put yourself out there a little bit. Being willing to say something that most of the time people would shy away from and be like, I would never. I wouldn't have either. But you know what? I did. And it meant something to her. And I'm sure that the next time I see her, the first thing I'm going to ask her is, hey, I hope everything's going well. Are you, is everything, are you better? Is everything going better for you? Is there something that else, is there something particularly, specifically that I can be praying for you?

Last pastoral meeting, I got asked by somebody, what does success look like to me for Bethel? Well, I went off for a good few minutes about it, what that means to me. And because it's something I'm passionate about, guys. It's something that I think we should all be passionate about.

God calls us to make disciples. What does that look like? God calls us.

Number one, he says there that we're supposed to, Christ redeemed us from the law. We have the gospel. I just gave you what the gospel is in a roundabout sense.

But if you are a Christian, you know what the gospel is. You know what Jesus has done specifically for you. You know what personally the gospel looks like for you. How it has moved in your life. How it has changed your life. There's nothing, there's no greater way to share the gospel than to share your testimony. Because nobody can refute your testimony. Nobody can tell you, no, I don't think that's the way that your life happened. Nobody can tell you that. Having your testimony, knowing what God has done for you, and being able to openly and willingly share that with somebody, is one of the greatest ways to share the gospel with people. That's how you start making disciples. That's how you start. You find somebody that you have an established relationship with. You find somebody. Because the only way to build a disciple is to build a relationship with somebody. Jesus lived closely with the 12 guys that he passed on. Here's what you're supposed to be doing. Here is what you do to further the church. He built relationships with them. Guys, I can't build relationships with the amount of people that each and every one of you in here can.

Everybody in here has their own group of people. Everybody in here has an established relationship with somebody that they have built that they should be doing that with. A wise man by the name of Frank Whitney. You guys may or may not agree with that wise part. Frank told us one time, and Frank told us up here, he stood up here and he said, everybody needs three people in their life. Everybody needs a Paul. Everybody needs a Timothy. And everybody needs a Barnabas. Everybody needs a Paul. Everybody needs somebody in their life that is pouring into them. Everybody, each and every one of us needs somebody that is helping guide us and lead us to a deeper, more firm, more established relationship with Jesus.

Each and every one of us needs one of those. Each and every one of us needs a Timothy. Each and every one of us needs somebody that we are being a Paul to. Each and every one of us needs somebody that we are pouring into, and each and every one of us needs a Barnabas. Each and every one of us needs somebody next to us, encouraging us, holding us accountable, keeping us moving, building things, building up our relationship with that person is going to establish the other two all the much more. I think a Barnabas is probably one of the most important, personally, because somebody to encourage you and build you up and help you, to inflate you, if you will.

Somebody to do that for you, because there are times that you are struggling. There are times that it's difficult to want to go out and talk to somebody. You may not be in a place in your life where you're like, I don't really want to go out and talk to anybody. Well, you need that person in your life that's going to build you up and say, hey, go do this. I have one in my life. I have somebody, I have two or three Barnabases in my life, because sometimes, you know what, we need a little bit more than one person's worth of encouragement.

But that's what we should be doing. So what does success look like to me? Success to me looks like each and every person in here having somebody that I don't know, that we don't know, from outside of here, sitting next to them in church one day. That's what success looks like. And that's not a numbers thing. That is not in any sort of way a numbers thing. What that is, is that is a building disciples thing. Because if each and every one of us is doing our job as a Christian, if each and every one of us is doing what we should be doing, what God, what Jesus commanded us to do before he ascended was to go and make disciples. I'm not saying they have to come to church here. I have people that I disciple that don't live anywhere near here. I have people that are pouring into me that don't live anywhere around here. That doesn't necessarily mean here. But if each and every one of us can't sit back and really think that they have somebody that's pouring into them and somebody that they're pouring into, are we really doing our jobs as Christians?

Because knowing this is great.

Sharing this is even better. We can all know it. But if we're not going out and sharing it with people, then what are we doing? We can't keep it to ourselves. That's not what it's there for.

Again, how excited are you about what God has done in your life? Are you willing to share that with people? Are you willing to go out and say, man, I just want to tell you about Jesus and here's what Jesus has done for me. People will look at you weird. I know. I've done it. And people will look at you weird. But you know what? But if you've done nothing else, you've given them something to think about.

So here is my application to you guys. Here is my assignment for you guys for the week. I want each and every one of us to go out, and I'm including myself in this because I need to do it more myself. Each and every one of us, at some point this week, be intentional. Be mindful about the people that you are around and tell somebody about Jesus this week. Invite somebody to church. If you don't invite them here, hey, do you go to church anywhere? You should be. I'm not saying for one second that we need to each bring somebody here, but we need to be getting people in church. We are in a world of people that are far from God, and we are supposed to be that light. That is our job. That is what Jesus told us to do. Be the light. You can't be the light.

How effective is a flashlight to walk outside right now and turn on a flashlight?

Surrounded by light. Guess what? It's not doing a whole lot. Yeah, it's on. Yeah, it's shining. But what's the effect? Now go out in the parking lot in the middle of the night and turn on a flashlight. What happens? It lights up. You see different. You see things that you couldn't see in the dark.

We need to be reaching into the darkness. We can't sit in our own little bubbles of Christians and churchgoers and think that we're making a difference. Part of sharing the gospel is doing exactly what Jesus did. Go and find the people that need to hear about it. Go and find the people that you might have turned away from and taken a different aisle or detoured from in the grocery store.

Talk to people. Introduce who Jesus is to people. It's hard. I get it. It's not easy. And it can be stressful. But I can tell you from first-hand experience, some of the people that I have talked to, that I was like, this person is just, man, I don't know that this person is going to hear anything that I have to say. Those were the people that were usually the most receptive. Or the people that seemed like they were fighting against me were the ones that when the time came that everything started falling apart, they came to me and they said, hey. So you remember when we talked about this?

Don't ever underestimate the power of planting a seed in somebody's life. You may not be the one that waters it. You may not be the one that sees it flourish and grow and turn into something. But that doesn't mean that you need to turn away from planting a seed. We need to be doing that. We need to be sharing the gospel with people.

So, again, we talked about what the law was. We talked about what the gospel is.

And we talked about what, as Christians, we should be doing. So, again, this week, go out. Share Jesus with somebody.

Share Jesus with somebody that is easy. I don't care if it's somebody that's in your own family that you've been like, you know what, I need to be doing this. And I haven't yet. I have those people in my own family. I haven't done it. I'm just as guilty. I'm not standing up here telling you guys anything

that I'm not telling myself.

Tell them about Jesus and then intentionally be praying for them and what they heard. Be intentionally talking to them and praying for them. If you don't have somebody discipling you, find somebody to disciple you. If you're not discipling somebody, find somebody to disciple. If you don't feel like you're in a place where you should be discipling somebody, look for a Paul that much harder. Find one. I will tell you guys right now, I have a couple of them in my life, and there are quite a few of them that now it's difficult for me to get in touch with them because they're busy all the time, because they are pouring into other people constantly. That is their whole mission is reaching out and pouring into people. I have people that are my mentors that I have tried calling, and they're just like, I'm swamped with people right now. That's a good thing. We need to be that way.

Share the gospel.

And be intentional about doing so.

Closing Prayer

Father, we love you. Father, we thank you for your word. Father, we thank you for the gospel. Father, we thank you for what it has done for each and every one of us in here. And Father, if it hasn't changed our lives, Father, let it do that.

Help us to find the people like that that we know need Jesus. Find the people like that that we know would have a much better life because we know what our life looks like now that we have you. Father, help us to be willing to go out and share the great and amazing thing that you've done in each and every one of our lives. Because, Father, how great can we think that it is if we're not willing to share it with others?

God, we love you.

Again, we thank you for your word. Father, we thank you again. And we thank you daily for the gift of salvation through your son, Jesus. And we ask all of these things in his name. Amen. Amen. Amen.

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