

**Galatians 3: 10-12; “The Law is not of Faith”, Message # 16 in the series -  
“Christ has Made Us Free”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall  
On October 11<sup>th</sup>, 2020, at the church.**

There is a principle in verse 12 which I would like us to think about at this time. It is that the law is not of faith. It is one of the most important principles that either believers or unbelievers can ever learn. For without understanding it, unbelievers cannot be justified in the sight of God; they cannot be saved from their sins. And for believers, without their understanding the difference between the law and faith, a believer may become legalistic in the way that they live their Christian life. This was the problem with some of the believers in the Galatian churches. A legalist is a person who tries to justify themselves before God on the basis of their own works rather than trusting in what God has done for them through our Lord Jesus Christ.

A true Christian, however, may also fall into a legalistic mindset if they believe that they only continue to experience God’s favor because of their own consistency of obedience, or their thinking that they will lose it if they have not been as consistent as they should be. Rather, we should understand that a person is not only justified by faith, but they should also know that God intends them to grow in their obedience by faith in Jesus Christ, their striving to keep His commandments in the power of the Holy Spirit. So, there are 2 reasons given to us here to show us why the law is not of faith. The 1<sup>st</sup> reason is that those who are of the law are under a curse. (verse 10) The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason is that the law does not have the ability to give life to us. (verses 11 and 12) Let us consider that believing and living according to these blessed truths will bring us joy and peace in believing in Christ and in striving to do His will.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – The law is not of faith because those who are of the law are under a curse.**

Verse 10 says – “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.’” This last sentence is a quote from Deuteronomy Chapter 27: 26 – “Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.” The only difference is, in the use of the word “confirm” instead of the word “continue”. But the confirming is continuing in what the Apostle Paul is saying here, by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit. This verse it is more understandably explained back in Deuteronomy 11: 22-29 if you will turn there with me. “For if you carefully keep all these commandments which I command you to do—to love the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, and to hold fast to Him—then the Lord will drive out all these nations from before you, and you will dispossess greater and mightier nations than yourselves.” “Every place on which the sole of your foot treads shall be yours: from the wilderness and Lebanon, from the river, the River Euphrates, even to the Western Sea, shall be your territory.”

“No man shall be able to stand against you; the Lord your God will put the dread of you and fear of you upon all the land where you tread, just as He has said to you.” “Behold I set before you today a blessing and a curse; the blessing, if you obey the commandments of the Lord your God which I command you today; and the curse, if you do not obey the commandments of the Lord your God, but turn aside from the way which I command you today, to go after other gods which you have not known.” “Now it shall be, when the Lord your God has brought you into the land which you go to possess, that you shall put the blessing on Mount Gerizim and the curse on Mount Ebal.” These two mountains were to be large symbols of the blessing and the curse of God in relation to the Old Covenant and the law.

Gerizim means, “Those who cut down, or reap, or harvest”. It symbolizes the great fertility and blessing which would come to Israel if they would obey God’s commandments. Ebal means “rough, rugged, and curled”. And its name symbolizes the great barrenness and desolation which would come to Israel if they disobeyed His commandments. Indeed curses would come upon them. These blessings and curses are further delineated in their particulars in relation to the nation of Israel in Deuteronomy 27 and 28. It should be noted that the curses and the blessings were set forth in

relation to the moral commandments of God's holy law, and not the ceremonial ones. Therefore it was used in this way by the Apostle as he wrote this letter to the Galatians. What was being required of the people under the Old Covenant was the three basic moral duties which relate the first and greatest commandment. It was, that if they were careful to keep God's commandments they would love the Lord their God, they would walk in His ways, and they would hold fast to Him. There was, however, a problem in their being able to do this.

Turn over with me to Deuteronomy 5, verse 28. These are the words of the Lord after the people had come to Moses and told him that they did not want to hear God's voice speaking directly to them, for it made them afraid. "Then the Lord heard the voice of your words when you spoke to me, and the Lord said to me: 'I have heard the voice of the words of this people which they have spoken to you.'" "They are right in all that they have spoken." "Oh, that they had such a heart in them that they would fear Me and always keep My commandments, that it might be well with them and with their children forever!" He then went on to give to Moses to give to them in Chapter 6 – The first and greatest commandment; that they should love the Lord their God with all of their heart.

But what was their problem, according to God? They did not have a heart to keep all of His commandments. They were "of the works of the law". They were under the Old Covenant. God would tell them what He expected of them, which was good and reasonable, but they did not confirm the covenant by their obedience. They did not continue in all the commandments which were given to them. Instead they rebelled against Him time and again after He delivered them from their bondage in Egypt. Turn over to Deuteronomy 9, verses 23 and 24. This is Moses relating to the children of Israel their sins in the sight of the holy God. "Likewise, when the Lord sent from Kadesh Barnea, saying, 'Go up and possess the land which I have given you, then you rebelled against the commandment of the Lord your God and you did not believe Him nor obey His voice.'" "You have been rebellious against the Lord from the day that I knew you."

And so, we must ask ourselves once again, "What was their problem?" God had shown them many great and mighty things in their deliverance from Egypt, and His leading them to the land flowing with milk and honey. The problem was that they could not continue in all the things that God had commanded them to do, and therefore they were under a curse. And the reason that they were under the curse of the law was because they "did not believe God, nor obey His voice." This was true of the vast majority of them, in all of their wilderness wanderings. It was not as though God was not faithful to His covenant with them. Turn with me over to Deuteronomy 32, verse 10-12. "He found him in a desert land and in the wasteland, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye." "As an eagle stirs up its nest, hovers over its young, spreading out its wings, taking them up, carrying them on its wings, so the Lord alone led him, and there was no foreign god with him."

Now look down at verse 15 – "But Jeshurun grew fat and kicked; you grew fat, you grew thick, You are obese!" "Then he forsook God who made him, and scornfully esteemed the Rock of his salvation." "They provoked Him to jealousy with foreign gods; with abominations they provoked Him to anger." "They sacrificed to demons, not to God, to gods they did not know, to new gods, new arrivals that you fathers did not fear." "Of the Rock who begot you, you are unmindful, and have forgotten the God who fathered you." "And when the Lord saw it, He spurned them, because of the provocation of His sons, and His daughters." "And He said, 'I will hide My face from them, I will see what their end will be, for they are a perverse generation, children in whom is no faith.'"

So here we see what the problem was. They thought that they had the power and the ability within themselves to keep the commandments of God. But they did not have a heart, and they did not have faith. And therefore they fell under all the curses of God listed under Chapters 27 and 28. They were under a national covenant of works, and they as a nation failed to keep God's word and His commandments. The curse of the law could not be lifted from them, and neither can it be lifted from us, except through the grace of Jesus Christ our Lord. They scornfully esteemed the Rock of

their salvation. Of the Rock who had begot them, they were unmindful. We know from 1<sup>st</sup> Corinthians 10, verse 4, that the “Rock” was Christ. They all ate the same spiritual food, the manna, and they all drank the spiritual drink of the water which came from the Rock. But you see, they loved their own selfish and sinful way too much, even to have faith in the types of Christ their coming Messiah. We should see from this, that man as he is in his fallen natural state does not have the power even to trust in Christ. He is going to have to have something more. And this leads us to our 2<sup>nd</sup> point.

**The 2<sup>nd</sup> reason that the law is not of faith is that the law does not have life to give to us.** (verses 11 and 12)

Verse 11 says – “But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, but the just shall live by faith.” “Yet the law is not of faith, but ‘the man who does them shall live by them’.” Here the Apostle Paul is contrasting faith and works as ways in which to be justified, or to be declared righteous, before God. If a man was able to keep all of God’s commandments perfectly and if he continued in them, to do them all consistently, at all times, and from all the right motives, he would then be confirmed in eternal life. “He who does them shall live by them.” But this, no man apart from Christ is able to do. But God in the law said that Israel should do this. Turn with me over to Leviticus 18, verses 1-5. “Then the Lord spoke to Moses, saying, ‘Speak to the children of Israel, and say to them: ‘I am the Lord your God.’” “According to the doings of the land of Egypt, where you dwelt, you shall not do; and according to the doing of the land of Canaan, where I am bringing you, you shall not do; nor shall you walk in their ordinances.” “You shall observe My judgments and keep My ordinances, to walk in them: I am the Lord.” “You shall therefore keep My statutes and My judgments, which if a man does, he shall live by them: I am the Lord.”

You can see that God’s expectation of the children of Israel was that they would be a people separated unto Him; that they would not walk as the Gentiles walked, in the way that they lived their lives. He is expecting the same of us converted Gentiles in the New Testament times. 2<sup>nd</sup> Corinthians 6: 17 and 18 – “Come out from among them and be separate, says the Lord.” “Do not touch what is unclean, and I will receive you.” “I will be a Father to you, and you shall be My sons and daughter, says the Lord Almighty.” But how are we to do this? Certainly we cannot do it perfectly, in and of ourselves, by any stretch of the imagination. If we are justified by faith in Christ, then we can by His grace, learn not to touch what is unclean. We can learn to be separate from sinners, and yet not be self-righteous; that is, that we would try to love and care for them.

Look over at Hebrews 11: 24-26. “By faith Moses, when he became of age, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh’s daughter, choosing rather to suffer affliction with the people of God than to enjoy the passing pleasures of sin, esteeming the reproach of Christ greater riches than the treasures in Egypt; for he looked to the reward.” “By faith he forsook Egypt, not fearing the wrath of the king; for he endured as seeing Him who is invisible.” There’s the way to forsake the world and to love the people of God; it is by exercising faith in the unseen Christ. Moses, we know, was not a perfect man, but he had strong faith. It was by faith that he did these godly things that he did. The just man, the person who is trusting in the promises of God, is justified; and they live by faith. That is, they walk by faith and not by sight.

By attempting to keep the law without faith, not only can a person not be justified in God’s sight, but they cannot live the Christian life either. They cannot walk with God in uprightness of heart, or do good works from the right motives. But with faith in Christ, all of these things can be done in a way which is acceptable to God. Turn over to Habakkuk Chapter 2, verse 1. Habakkuk, in Chapter 1 had been asking God questions. In verse 13 of Chapter 1 he had said to God, “You are of purer eyes than to behold evil, and cannot look on wickedness.” “Why do You look on those who deal treacherously, and hold Your tongue when the wicked devours a person more righteous than he?” Habakkuk then says in verse 1 of Chapter 2 – “I will stand my watch and set myself on the rampart, and watch to see what He will say to me, and what I will answer when I am corrected.” “Then the Lord answered me and said: ‘Write the vision and make it plain on tablets, that he may

run who reads it.” “For the vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it will speak, and it will not lie.” “Though it tarries, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry.” “Behold the proud, his soul is not upright within him; but the just shall live by his faith.”

In other words, Habakkuk, there may be many things that you do not understand about what God permits, or what He ordains, in His wisdom. He may allow the cruel Chaldean armies come in to desolate Israel, but He does all things for a purpose, to correct, to instruct, to save, and to teach His people to live by faith. God knows that His own dear people must learn to do and keep His commandments, even when not many around them are doing them. This is what we are called to. But I want you to see that the only way that a person can live by faith is if they have been born again by the Spirit of God, and then by faith they have trusted in Jesus Christ the Lord.

In closing, turn with me over to Deuteronomy 29, verse 1. “These are the words of the covenant which the Lord commanded Moses to make with the children of Israel in the land of Moab, besides the covenant which He made with them in Horeb.” (This covenant came 40 years after the one God gave on Sinai) “Now Moses called all Israel and said to them: ‘You have seen all that the Lord did before your eyes in the land of Egypt, to Pharaoh and to all his servants and to all his land—the great trials which your eyes have seen, the signs, and those great wonders.’ “Yet the Lord has not given you a heart to perceive and eyes to see and ears to hear, to this very day.” (That is why they could not live the life of faith; they didn’t have a heart to do it.)

Now turn over to Chapter 30, verses 1-8. Here is a prophecy of what God will do for His ancient people the Jews in the future, when He calls them to Himself and into the church. “Now it shall come to pass, when all these things come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have set before you, and you call them to mind among all the nations where the Lord your God drives you, and you return to the Lord your God and obey his voice, according to all that I command you today, you and your children, with all your heart and with all your soul, that the Lord your God will bring you back from your captivity, and have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you.” “If any of you are driven out to the farthest parts under heaven, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will bring you.” “Then the Lord our God will bring you to the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it.” “He will prosper you and multiply you more than your fathers.” “And the Lord your God will circumcise your heart and the heart of your descendants, to love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul, that you may live.” “Also the Lord your God will put all these curses on your enemies and on those who hate you, who persecuted you.” “And you will again obey the voice of the Lord and do all His commandments which I command you today.”

These, by the ways, are the blessings which the Lord will bring to the Jews in a coming day. And you see that verse 11 of Deuteronomy 30 is quoted by the apostle Paul over in Romans 10, verse 5. He says – “For Moses writes about the righteousness which is of the law, ‘The man who does those things shall live by them.’ “But the righteousness of faith speaks in this way, ‘Do not say in your heart, ‘Who will ascend into heaven?’ (That is to bring Christ down from above) or ‘Who will descend into the abyss?’ (That is to bring Christ up from the dead), but what does it say?’ “The word is near you, in your mouth and in your heart’ (That is the word of faith which we preach): that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in our heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved.” The law cannot bring life to one who is of the law, and is trying to keep God’s commandments. But the gospel of Christ can and it does bring life to sinful hearts, when it is believed. When the gospel is believed, when it is obeyed, then the vilest of sinners can be saved, and will be justified. And then when the Holy Spirit is given to them, that person’s faith will grow and be built, to the glory of God. And having been given this New Heart, and the power to live to God, they then go about to live a life of repentance and obedience to God’s commands by faith; having their greatest joy in doing so. May it be so, for each of you.