

## Galatians 3:19-29

### “Here’s Your Sin; Here’s Your Savior”

Paul has been dropping bombs & proving his point. He’s presented both subjective experience & objective biblical evidence demonstrating that we’re justified before God on the sole basis of grace through faith.

You see there were those who were arguing, telling the Galatians that if they wanted to be right w/God they had to do “this” & they couldn’t do “that”. Ever met those people? But Paul was saying quite the contrary. That the way we *get* right w/God & *stay* right w/God has nothing to do w/what we do for *Him*, it has everything to do w/trusting in the sufficiency of what He’s done for *us* in the Person of J.C.

That’s the essential difference between *true* biblical Christianity & every other religion in the world! Religion (including what we might call “churchianity”) is all about mankind reaching up to God & seeking to find acceptance on the basis of personal performance, or human effort of some kind. **You know, reaching up through human wisdom, reaching up through human achievement, through service or sacrifice. - True Christianity (on the other hand) isn’t about reaching up to God through the means of some incredible accomplishment or demonstration of piety.** It’s about God reaching down to man (man being unable to reach up to God because we’re dead in sin) through the Person of J.C. & saying, “Believe upon *Me*. It’s not about what you can do, or how wise you are, or the sacrifices you make. The basis of our relationship is based upon what I have done *for* you, what I have given *to* you in Christ & you believing that & receiving that by faith.”

Listen family, that’s the means through which this transformation from, “dead in sin to alive in Christ” takes place... it’s by faith in J.C. who has loved us & given Himself for us. It’s never been about how great *we* are; it’s always been about how great *God* is & the manner of love (too high to comprehend) that He has bestowed upon us in Christ... To the Ephesians Paul said that like this, “*But God, who is rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in trespasses, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up together, and made us sit together in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus,*”<sup>1</sup>

Now that doesn’t mean that as believers we don’t do good works or bring forth fruit to the glory of God. Simple obedience to the word of God isn’t legalism (it’s wisdom). But the good that you do isn’t to *obtain* God’s love; it’s the *overflow* of God’s love having already been poured out in your life (BIG difference).

<sup>1</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Eph 2:4-6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Jesus was clear that if we love Him we'll keep His commands (we'll do what He says). But He didn't say, "Keep My commands & I'll love *you*." (That's legalism, gaining God's love through achievement). He said, "Keep My commands if you love *Me*." (Jn 14:15)

There's a big difference in wanting to be pleasing to God because you love Him & seeking to earn God's love so you try to please to Him...

Why are we saying all this? Because Paul has been having to demonstrate to the Galatian believers that righteousness (a right standing before God) does not come (contrary to what others were telling them) through our ability to keep (obey) the Law of God. We spent extensive time in our last study developing the fact that the Law of God, far from praising us, it penalizes us, far from bringing salvation/justification it only confines us under condemnation.

So the question comes up, & it's fair question... what then is the point of the Law? If it can't bring righteousness, if it can't give me a justified standing in the sight of God, than why was it given in the 1<sup>st</sup> place? Let's turn our attention to Vs 19.

### Vs 19-21

Ok, let's not forget that Paul is pointing out the permanence of promise. God *promised* to Abraham that in him (that is through his Seed [speaking of the Messiah/Jesus]) all the families of the earth would be blessed. Speaking of the salvation that would be made available to all who believed in Him by faith.

It was an unconditional promise that God gave Abraham... The argument has been that righteousness before God comes through the law given to Moses & Paul is demonstrating that the promise that God gave Abraham (of justification by faith) was over 400 yrs before the law & that Moses can't come along & change God's word to Abraham any more than a contract between 2 people can be changed by a 3<sup>rd</sup> party today. The promise is *permanent*.

The law however was temporary; it was given to Israel for a specific purpose (notice) "till" (that's a word that speaks of a temporary/conditional amount of time), "...till the Seed (that is Jesus) should come to whom the promise was made."

You see there are 2 ways in which the promise of God (of justification by faith) is superior to the law. #1 The promise is *permanent* in it's nature, the law was *temporary* in it's nature. We could add to that the fact that the promise was *unconditional*. When you read of the promise God made Abraham you won't find the word "if" anywhere in there.

Nothing was conditional it was *all* of grace. However the blessings of the law are based entirely upon conditions. God would say, “If” you do “this”, “Then” I will do “that”. You want the blessing; meet the condition. If you don’t meet the condition, not only will there be no reward, you will incur a penalty.

So the promise was permanent & unconditional. The law was temporary (given in the interim period after Abraham & before Christ) & layered w/conditions.

The 2<sup>nd</sup> way that the law is inferior to the promise was the necessity of mediators. Notice Vs 19 “It was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.” In other words, when God gave the law to Moses He did so through the means of angels, there was a “go between” between God & Moses, also Moses mediated between God & the nation. So the law was established by mediation, God entered into a covenant w/Israel that basically stated that if Israel lived up to their end, God would live up to His.

But as it pertained to the promise, there *was no mediator* (that’s what Vs 20 is pointing out) that there’s no mediator necessary for one & God is one. The promise God made to Abraham was not bilateral (involving both of them) it was unilateral dependent solely upon God. **It had nothing to do w/Abraham’s ability to meet a certain standard; it was based solely upon God’s ability, God’s word & God’s faithfulness.**

**Here’s the take away, salvation by grace through faith is not dependent upon man in any way, it is exclusively God’s responsibility therefore it cannot fail.** God has made you a promise, **“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved”**<sup>2</sup> Once you believe in your heart upon the Lord J.C. you become a partaker of the promise & the promise isn’t bilateral (you have your part God has His), it’s unilateral, God made a promise & He will be faithful to see it through. It’s the Phil 1:6 principle, **“...being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ;”**<sup>3</sup>

**Does that mean the law was revoked when Jesus came? No, Jesus said that He came to fulfill the law, not to destroy it. But it does mean that the law is no longer our ground of approaching God. We find our access to God through Christ, not the law.**

Well then (back to our original question), if not to make us righteous, if not to justify us, what was the purpose of the law in the 1<sup>st</sup> place? It was added (notice) “because of transgression”, in other words, the law was never given to *remove* sin, it was given to *reveal* sin.

<sup>2</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Ac 16:31]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

<sup>3</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Php 1:6]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

Paul elaborates on this in the book of Romans. He said, *"Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin."*<sup>4</sup> The law wasn't to give you a big head as you did "this" & didn't do "that", it was meant to give you a humble heart as you realized you couldn't do *any of it* from the heart... You see the law was spiritual, but man took it to be physical.

So that when the law said, "Thou shall not commit adultery" people thought, "Seems ez enough, I won't sleep w/anyone outside of my spouse." But the law wasn't only at outward activity, it was aimed at inward intent. So that when Jesus said, "You've heard it said, 'thou shall not commit adultery' but I say to you (or I'll explain it to you) if you even look on another individual to lust for them, you've already committed adultery in your heart." We go, "Ooohh! Yeah, guilty as charged." You see, the law wasn't given to exonerate or vindicate our *righteousness*, but to demonstrate our *guiltiness* before God.

It's not that sin wasn't in the world before the law, but the law was showing how far we cross over from the holy standards of God's righteousness into the sinfulness of transgression thereby demonstrating that what we deserve isn't God's praise, but His penalty. How that through sin we justifiably incur His wrath. So the law shows us how *Holy God is, & how sinful we are.*

That's not to say there isn't a moral value to the law, of course there is. However the primary purpose of the law is to show us our predisposed state of condemnation that we might be open to the hope of salvation through faith in Christ. Once we realize we can't *obtain* righteousness, we're open (even desirous) to be *given* the righteousness of Christ (by God's grace) through faith.

So you see, the law & the promise aren't contrary to one another (Vs 21) they aren't against one another. They actually compliment one another. The law is a ministry of condemnation, the promises are a ministry of salvation, they each have a distinct function. Once I understand that I'm a sinner (through the law), I'm ready & prepared for the promise... salvation by grace through faith in J.C.

The law is incapable of giving life, not because there's something wrong w/the law, but because there's something wrong w/us, we're sinners therefore we can't keep the law. Write it down & look it up later; Rom 8:2-4.

## Vs 22

You see? The Scripture (the law) shows us *all* to be sinners; confines *all* under sin.

<sup>4</sup> The New King James Version. (1982). [Ro 3:20]. Nashville: Thomas Nelson.

It's a picture of imprisonment. You, are a prisoner to sin, so am I. The law put us in prison having pointed out our sinful condition & the bars of the cell is sin itself. We're imprisoned by sin...

Perhaps that offends you, you're thinking, "I'm no prisoner to sin!" There's an ez way to prove that... Just quit sinning 😊! Here's the test, we'll go all week w/out sin (we can't sin in word, deed, thought or intent) & when we meet here next week we'll compare notes... It can't be done, you can't go a single day w/out sin, its inherent w/in your nature.

There's no chance of a prison break here, you're confined to sin... Think about it, mankind is capable of incredible things, we can put a man in space, plumb the depths of the sea. Accomplish incredible feats of the human will & show triumph of the human spirit... **You watch a triathlon & the athlete falls down just 100' from the finish line. They've swam for miles, road their bike for miles, ran for miles & just before they finish they fall, but the pick themselves up & drag themselves across the line bleeding & exhausted... Everyone cheers, it's a triumph of the human spirit... surely one w/that kind of discipline could quit sinning... Nope! It can't be done.**

There's only one way out of the jail cell of sin; it won't be your righteousness (nor mine), it's through the righteousness of Christ given to us through faith in Jesus.

### Vs 23-25

In other words, once you've come to faith in Christ, the law has served its purpose. Now when it's talking about "the faith" here; that's not to say that faith wasn't around in the age of the OT; it was. This is a reference specifically to faith in Jesus. So the law (Vs 24) acted as a "tutor" (bad translation) bringing us to Christ that we might be justified by faith.

This word "Tutor" speaks of more than that of simple education. In the ancient Roman/Grecian culture there would often be a household slave who would be responsible to oversee; guide, direct & correct the child(ren) till they matured & came of age. **They'd supervise the morals of the young boy, wherever he went, whatever he did, he was being overseen, given direction & correction until he was considered ready to be acknowledged as a reliable, trustworthy adult. Their position was important, but temporary.**

Paul says that's like the position of the law in our lives. It watches out over us, giving us a moral compass, directing us, correcting us, showing us our inadequacies until we come to a point that we receive J.C. ... Then, having shown us our sin, introduced us to our Savior, its place is concluded in our lives. It's place has been vitally important, but temporary.

## Vs 26-27

If this isn't a mind-blowing statement & a cause for celebration I don't know what is. This is your identity in Christ, you are a son (child) of God. The world seeks identity in career or social status. Their identity is "Dr." so & so, "Judge" so & so, "Professor" so & so; or their identity is in the company name, their riches or fame. Not so for you & me, we're "sons of God" through faith in Christ Jesus.

Think about that. My children have a special place in my life that others (quite frankly) don't. They have a place of affection, a place of closeness, access to me, they can be near me or hear from me any time they want. As God's child He loves you, He cares for you, He wants you to draw near to Him & spend time w/Him. He's your Father, you're His child.

"For as many of you as were baptized *into* Christ have put *on* Christ." Now don't be confused here, this isn't a reference to physical baptism into water. This is a reference to a spiritual baptism into Christ. Just as when you're physically baptized you're fully immersed in water, this is a reference to what happens when you're born again, when you believe on the Lord J.C. you're fully immersed into Christ.

& Even though we believe water baptism is an essential act of obedience, that's not the baptism that saves you; *this* is the baptism that saves you. Being baptized into Christ is tantamount to being "born again" (Jn 3). If a person isn't baptized into Christ than you can dunk them in water 1,000x's it won't help them a bit as it pertains to their standing before God.

But when a person comes to faith in Jesus they're immersed completely into Christ; they're completely covered by His righteousness. You aren't simply associated *with* Jesus, you're identified *in* Jesus. If He's a Son, than so are you, if He stands righteous before God, than so do you, if He has free access to the throne of God, than so do you, if He has victory over the powers of darkness, than so do you. You're not simply associated w/Christ, you are *in* Christ. You have "put on" Christ.

It's a change of garments, beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness... It's funny, when some people get in water, they don't like to go all in, they leave their head out. But when you're baptized into Christ, you're "all in" you don't leave your head out so you can think how you wanna think. Now you don, "The helmet of salvation" (Eph 6) you've been given the mind of Christ.

The bible tells us to bring every thought into captivity to the obedience of Christ. We don't leave our feet out so we can go where we want, do our own thing. We're to shod our feet w/the preparation of the gospel of peace. **You see we're all in, breastplate of righteousness, belt of truth, shield of faith, sword of the Spirit (which is the word of God). We clothe ourselves w/Christ.**

People should see Jesus when they look at us, we're adorned w/Jesus having been baptized *into* Jesus. Write these down, look them up: Eph 4:20-24 & Col 3:3-14.

### **Vs 28-29**

**Another mind blowing revelation Paul brought to the table. No dividing lines in Christ. Man may see dividing lines of denominations, God doesn't. You're either in Christ or you're not... Some people divide over politics, or economic class, or national ethnicity. Those are lines that Jesus died to erase.**

Now that doesn't mean that God doesn't recognize order or authority, roles we've been called to walk in & all. He established such things. But there's no difference pertaining to our position in Christ, we're all one, all equal in Christ Jesus, we all have the same standing before God.

**You see, the issue isn't, "are you male, female, slave, free, Jew or Gentile. The issue is (Vs 29) "if you are Christ's". Being a son/daughter of God isn't according to *who* we are, or *what* we've done, it's according to the promise... Who *He* is, what *He's* done in Christ, believing it, receiving it by faith.**

### **Prayer Points:**

God we thank You for taking any road block out of the way. For calling us to Yourself not through our ability to perform, or achieve or accomplish, but through Your faithfulness to pay the penalty that we deserve that we might receive a righteous standing in Your sight, forgiveness of sin, everlasting life through simple faith in J.C.

**It's interesting, the devil would cause us to try & prove ourselves holy through the law. When God gave it to prove that we're sinners. & The wages of sin is death. Jesus paid that penalty, all manner of sin has been forgiven man.** What condemns a person isn't their inability to lead a righteous life, it's their rejection of J.C. who has loved you & given Himself for you. Don't reject Him, receive Him today. Turn from your sin, believe on the Lord J.C. & you will be saved.