



## Grace First

Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February 2024

GALATIANS 3:19-25

So let's get straight to it with the first of today's verses. In chapter 3 verse 19, the Bible says,

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 a mediator.

If the law cannot and it does not save then what is its purpose? Paul quickly gets to the point – it is all connected to our transgressions. **A transgression is an act that crosses the line of the law.** The law would fulfil its purpose for a limited time – from the day it was given to the Seed (Jesus Christ) would come. Also the Bible points out it was given by angels through Moses (the mediator) to mankind, which places it in a lower place than the promises of God. So the law is limited in power (it cannot save), in time (it is not forever) and its place (less than the promises).

So let us move into verse 20,

Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.

The idea of Moses as a mediator between God and His people via the law given by angels is a much different thing than God simply giving a promise of salvation simply by His word.

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 been by the law.

Is there a problem asks Paul. Is the law set against the promises of God in Christ Jesus? No, absolutely not, because if a law could have given life then you could have become right with God through the law. But that was not the intended purpose of the law. Look at verse 22,

But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.

The Scripture (or the law) was given to make sure we knew what sin was and that we were therefore all sinners. But here comes the stunning beauty of the

gospel **once the law has done its work of showing us we are all sinners the call of the gospel of Jesus Christ is to believe and receive salvation in Jesus Christ.**

But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

Paul is now talking about the experience of every Christian. Before you came to Christ in faith for His salvation, you were stuck under the word of God that was there to show you the sin that separated you from God. And you can either die separated from God or reconciled to God.

Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.

The rules that God laid down and gave to Moses was designed to do two things – (1) communicate the you are a sinner before God, and (2) show you your need is for a Saviour who could be a sinless sacrifice. And the good news is this,

But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

that once you have come to Christ your are no longer under the law. You are free. The law still stands as a reminder of the perfect nature and power of your Saviour. But it no longer keeps you in custody.

All that Paul has said can be summed up in one word – GRACE!

The law does something for the sinner that the sinner does not want done. It exposes a need that you and I cannot fix, we cannot resolves and we cannot change. This is, I believe, at the heart of every resistant hearer of the gospel. A generation on a mission to live for self does not want to hear of a gospel that causes them to see themselves as guilty and powerless.

And this is why preaching a gospel of truth a grace is so dangerous. In Acts 2:37 after Peter’s sermon at Pentecost had been preached,

Now when they heard this, they were cut to the heart, and said to Peter and the rest of the apostles, “Men and brethren, what shall we do?”

And thousands were saved. Then by contrast Stephen preaches and again the words get right inside people. Look at the words of Acts 7:54,

When they heard these things they were cut to the heart, and they gnashed at him with their teeth.

So two things are evident. (1) we must preach the truth of the gospel and (2) we must be speaking the truth in love. It is very easy for us to become judgemental in how we present the gospel. The flesh will happily rise up and present an 'I'm right, you're wrong' kind of a gospel.

➤ On the other hand there is another danger that can cause us to hold back with the gospel – a strange fear that this amazing grace is not amazing on everyone. This will become visible in lukewarm prayers. Your worship is no longer rooted in a secure sense of how amazing his grace is. And your testimony sounds like you're not actually too sure God can save the person who you are talking to.

➤ How do we stay in the right place?

1. Remember it is grace that saved you AND keeps you
2. Remember grace is the only thing that makes repentance possible
3. A life of worship of Jesus Christ will keep you on the narrow path between either extreme
4. Walk in humility – making much of Jesus and less of self
5. Forgive often and always

You must expect your flesh to push you away from these things. This is normally because we think if they see this much grace they will just think they can do whatever they want. Yes they might – but LET THEM. As Paul said in Romans 3:4,

...let God be true and every man a liar

➤ This week take a long hard look at yourself.

1. Are you frustrated at your stubborn child who will not come to Jesus, then ask God to remove the stubbornness of your own heart
2. Are you wondering why your friend will not accept God's forgiveness over their sin then be that forgiver of all sins against you – put down that grudge
3. Are you wondering why you keep quoting scriptures at all the sinners you know and yet they still will not turn to Christ then live out and apply every one of those Scriptures in your own life first
4. Are you beginning to wonder if they have ever listened to a word you have said around the gospel then maybe its time you shut up and had a prayer meeting

As I sat with someone this week lost in a sea of grief they expressed their anger at the way some things had been said and done by someone else in the past that was incredibly hurtful and painful. And they unloaded the question “what am I supposed to do with that?!” My mind raced through a number of different responses but God made one thing clear to me. One party needed to repent and one needed to forgive. And so my response was this. They are going to need grace because without that nothing will ever change.

Remember this, you cannot show them grace sat in the seat of your own self-righteousness. They are not wrong because you’re right. They are wrong because they are lost in sin, blinded by sin, angry because of sin, deaf because of sin, ignorant because of sin. You are not the cure – Jesus is. That’s why He has called you to take His grace to them. That’s why He left the glory of heaven to come to die for you and find you because you were never going to go looking for Him. We all need grace first!