

## GALATIANS 3:10-14

Title: Cursed of God

First Reading Deuteronomy 27:11- 26

Second Reading Deuteronomy 28:1-14

Read 3:6-14

Last week we looked at verses 5-10 which is where Paul puts forth his argument that salvation is by Faith alone, apart from the law and he goes on to prove that even Abraham, who was 430 years prior to the Mosaic Law was justified by faith. It was Abraham's belief and faith in God that was accounted to him for righteousness, not any work that he had done.

We looked at the promises that God gave to Abraham, that he would be the father of many nations, his children would be given land, and that the promised messiah would come from his lineage. All this, God promised him while he was a Gentile. So basically, Paul dismantled the Jewish argument that because they are Jews, and have the Mosaic Law that they are justified. Paul shows that justification comes only through faith, and that Abraham, the natural father of the nation of Israel is also the father of all those of faith, a holy nation.

Paul also argues that the gentile Christians are not just an add on, but rather was the God's plan all along. His promise to Abraham that in him all nations will be blessed. Not just Israel, the physical nation, but all those of faith from every nation, so then, those who are faith, are true son's of Abraham, heirs to the promises, and grafted in, by faith into the inheritance of the promised seed, which is Christ.

This week starting in verse 10 we will be looking at the other side of the coin. If justification comes by faith in Christ, and by faith alone, in Christ alone then that raises the question what about the law? Well to start here, Paul says the law brings a curse. In Deuteronomy when the people of Israel crossed the Jordan river and entered into the promised land, they split, 6 tribes stood on mount Gerisim, and 6 stood on on Mount Ebal and recited a list of blessings and curses. Which we read this morning.

Paul would be very familiar with this list of curses, having these curses read, while a person was whipped was a standard Jewish punishment, to which Paul had been subject to 5 times for preaching the gospel. The last curse, Cursed is anyone who does not obey and do all things which are written in the book of the law. This last curse shows God's judgment against sinful mankind. Cursed is ANYONE who does not obey, ALL things written in the law. God requires perfect obedience, perfect adherence to all of his commands at all times.

Well that is a problem. There is no way that man can keep God's law. In fact what Jesus taught went even further, Turn to Mathew 5 verse 21-23, also 27-29. As if the law given to Moses was not hard enough, Jesus goes to the heart and the thoughts of each person. So how do we reconcile this, who do we as Christians keep the law?

Well there are a few different views, in one There is a belief system that says the law that was given to Israel as a way for the Jews to be justified before God, and well that didn't work so then God sent Jesus to die for our sins. Since the law was too difficult to follow, God provided an easier way. So therefore the law does not apply to us in this church age. Well, this view is not entirely correct. I say not entirely because it gets one thing right, that we as believers are believers justified by faith, not by works of the

law. Where they go wrong though, is the idea that the law was intended to save. In fact the opposite, as we see over and over again, the law is a curse. Paul says those who are under the law, are under a curse...not saved, but cursed.

Another issue, if we follow this line of reasoning is that it can create a belief in 2 modes of salvation. One by law, and one by faith. The idea is that God's original plan was to save his Holy Nation of Israel, but seeing that Israel was rebellious turned instead to the Gentiles and made it easier for them all they had to do was believe in Jesus. That is a big problem, the bible does not teach that. You would only get that conclusion if you are coming to scriptures with a preconceived idea that God used varying plans, for different people to justify them. There has only ever been one way to be right with God, and that is Paul's argument throughout his writings. It is only by faith, and it has always been only by faith.

Then there is another view of some who would like to separate the law of God into 3 parts, the moral, the civil, and the ceremonial. Then they conclude, that the moral portion of the law, mainly the 10 commandments are a guide to the Christian life, the way we live a holy life. One major flaw with this idea, is that Paul says here, and as was said in Deuteronomy, cursed is everyone who does not do ALL things written in the law. The bible does never separate the law into sections. The law, is all commandments given to Israel, the moral, the civil, and the ceremonial. As Paul says, for as many as are of the works of the law are under curse. Not just the 10 commandments, but the whole law.

So we end up with an issue of our reformed brothers, preaching the law as a guide for the Christian life, and that we must abide by the 10 commandments. We must observe a specific Sabbath day in a particular way is one that you will see a lot. But they are mistaken, it isn't just the keeping of the 10 commandments to live a holy life, the bible never separates the law into separate categories as they are likely to do but rather, they are all one, they are all God's law. And in the book of James, it says that Whoever keeps the whole law, but fails in one point is guilty of it all. So if that is the case, there is no way that a person can be justified by keeping the whole law for it is impossible for a sinful human to be perfect. So that raises the question...if we are not justified by living a good life, by being a good person, by following the 10 commandments then what good are they? What is their purpose.

I think it is pretty clear to see that the purpose of the law, was given to show man's state toward God. The law given by God shows what God requires of man. The law was given so that sin would become exceedingly sinful. It points to a perfect God, who requires perfect obedience and if we fail in one of his commands then we are under the curse and guilty of them all. So the law isn't as some would believe a guide to follow so we can receive God's blessings, nor is it a system set up for justification for anyone. For as Paul says in verse 10, all those who are under the law are under a curse.

So, if the law is a curse to those who follow it. If we are not justified before God by our works, or by following the law then it must be by faith.

Looking at verse 11: But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for the just shall live by faith. Paul is putting forth an argument that pretty much destroys the idea of using the 10 commandments or the moral law as a guide for the life of the new testament Christian. He says that the just, those who are in Christ, shall live by faith. It is their faith in Christ that they live by, not by law.

Paul says it is obvious that no one, not one single person is justified by the law. That means no one ever was, no one is, and no one ever will be! and If anyone would know, it would be Paul. Earlier in

Galatians he wrote that he was exceedingly zealous for the law, for the traditions of his fathers. Paul was a law keeper, a Jew of Jews. And God revealed to him on the road to Damascus that despite how he thought he was doing everything right, everything that God had commanded, he had it all wrong and it was this very law that drove him to persecute the Christians. So It was clear to Paul that the law does not, can not, and was never intended to save anyone from God's wrath.

As I was studying this, an interesting thought came to mind, speaking of Paul persecuting the church in light of God's promises to Abraham. We have Paul, a Jew...the promised physical offspring, and child of Abraham, killing the promised spiritual children of Abraham. Which he now here in Galatians is saying are the true heirs of the promises.

So really The 2, the law and faith, are diametrically opposed to each other. You are either living by the law, looking to your works to gain a right standing before God, or you are living by faith, believing God's promises of being justified in his Son Jesus Christ. By the one, we are hoping that we did enough good things, we did enough right things that God will show us favor. The other, is putting our life, our trust, and hope in the sacrifice of the promised messiah who died for us, to pay the penalty of the law's curse.

Paul says that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law. We are all unable to live up to the law requirements, we are all under the law's curse and God's wrath. But Christ, the promised seed of Abraham, the 1<sup>st</sup> born of many brethren became a curse for us. For it is written, cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.

To understand this, we need to understand the old testament law for the execution of a criminal. Deuteronomy 21 says that If a man has committed a sin deserving of death, and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree. His body shall not remain overnight on the tree but you shall surely bury him that day, so that you do not defile the land which the Lord your God is giving you as an inheritance, for he who is hanged is accursed of God.

This form of capital punishment was very public, and it showed that the offender was under God's curse. The apostles often used the term hanging on a tree when referring to Christ and the Cross. It would communicate to the Jews that Christ, the Son of God, the promised seed, had become cursed of God and was punished. The difference is, was that it was nothing that he had done of himself. Christ was the perfect, sinless son of God, who took upon himself, our curse, our punishment, he endured God's wrath in our place so that we may become brothers, and heirs of the promises with him. Christ who knew no sin, became sin for us so that we maybe reconciled to God through him. That is the gospel that Paul shared to the Galatians before, that is the gospel that Paul is reminding the Galatians of. It is faith in Christ, not law that saved them from God's wrath.

Paul by pointing to Abraham, proves that salvation and justification before God has always been by faith. As he reminds the churches in Galatia and is teaching us today that Christ is the promised seed to Abraham. The messiah, who would give his life to save his people, the holy nation that God promised Abraham. All those who are of faith, are sons of Abraham, and if sons, heirs according to promise.

That means us, gentiles, are heirs of the true promise land, that we are the true holy nation, in Christ. If that does not encourage every one of you as you go about your day then I don't know what will. You who are of faith, are a child of God, joint heirs with Christ. Next time you are struggling, or having a rough day remember Christ, who suffered for you, how became a curse for you, who paid the penalty

for your sin, who suffered God's wrath in your place, who bought you with his own blood. Think upon the promises to Abraham, which come to us by faith. The very creator, sovereign God...had you christian, in his plan when he made those promises to Abraham.