

**Galatians 3: 13 and 14; “Christ Became a Curse For Us”, Message # 17 in the series - “Christ Has Made Us Free”, Conducted by Pastor Paul Rendall on the evening of October 16<sup>th</sup>, 2013, at the church.**

There is perhaps no other truth which is so hard to learn as is this truth; that trying to keep God’s holy law will not bring you into favor with God. Instead it brings a curse. By nature, most people just think that if they become religious, if they will try their hardest to do and keep God’s commandments, then surely God will honor their good intentions, and will save them and bring them to heaven at the last. But the Apostle Paul has been showing us in this letter that it is utterly impossible for any person to save themselves from their sins, whether they are a Jew, or whether they are a Gentile. You can only be saved from your sins by faith in Jesus Christ. And the law is not of faith. Therefore, in these verses, we find Paul explaining for us how we are saved from our sins. 1<sup>st</sup> of all – Christ saves us by redeeming us from the curse of the Law having become a curse for us. And 2<sup>nd</sup> – Christ became a curse for us so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. Let’s look more deeply into these things together now.

**1<sup>st</sup> of all – Christ saves us by redeeming us from the curse of the Law.**

Verse 13 says - “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’).” Now, this is describing for us what our Lord Jesus had to do for each and every person who would have eternal life; he had to redeem them from the curse of the law. We have already seen in verse 10 that 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 the things which are written in the book of the law to do them.’” The curse is upon all who are not perfect in their obedience to God’s holy law, both Jew and Gentile, for all are under sin. Turn with me over to Romans 3: 9 – “What then?” “Are we better than they?” “Not at all.” “For we have previously charged both Jews and Greeks that they are all under sin.” “As it is written: “There is none righteous, no, not one; there is none who understands; there is none who seeks after God.” “They have all turned aside; they have together become unprofitable; there is none who does good, no, not one.” Now, it is evident that all men are under the guilt and condemnation of sin in the sight of God. Christ is spoken of here in our verse that we are studying, as having done this great thing; He redeemed us from the law’s curse. Christ had to purchase our pardon; He had to become our surety; that is, He had to willingly come and take our place. This is what He did when He went to the cross. Through his righteous actions, and through His sufferings, He fulfill the law which we have broken, and then God could impute Christ’s righteousness to each one who believes in Him.

Our text says that he became a curse for us. Turn over with me to Deuteronomy 21, verse 22. “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.” Now, we should note in regard to ourselves, that each of us has committed far more than one sin, in breaking God’s law, and so we are deserving of death. Adam only committed one sin in the beginning, in the garden of Eden, by eating of the forbidden fruit. And in doing that, the guilt of His sin was charged to all of us as well, for He was the head of our race. Turn with me over to Romans Chapter 5, verse 12-18. “Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(For until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law.” “Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.” “But the free gift is not like the offense.” “For if by the one man’s offense many died, much more

the grace of God and the gift by the grace of the one Man, Jesus Christ, abounded to many.” “And the gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned.” “For the judgment which came from one offense resulted in condemnation, but the free gift which came from many offenses resulted in justification.” “For if by the one man’s offense death reigned through the one, much more those who receive abundance of grace of the gift of righteousness will reign in life through the One, Jesus Christ.)” “Therefore, as through one man’s offense judgment came to all men, resulting in condemnation, even so through one Man’s righteous act the free gift came to all men, resulting in justification of life.”

The comparison here is between Adam and Christ. They are both Federal Heads, that is they are both heads of a whole race of people. Adam is the head of our whole race physically and spiritually in relation to our being guilty and defiled sinners. He brought sin and death into the world. Christ is the representative head of all of God’s Elect, the whole race of chosen people who are in Him; chosen from before the foundation of the world. Then Paul explains the differences between Adam and Christ. “The gift is not like that which came through the one who sinned.” The judgment upon Adam, which was passed on to us, resulted in all of us being condemned; we are under the curse of the broken covenant of works, which test Adam failed to pass to be confirmed in his righteousness. Death has reigned through Adam’s sin in every man except Christ, ever since. When Christ came and fulfilled the law, He purchased the free gift of His righteousness being able to be imputed by God, to us who are unworthy sinners. Each believing sinner receives abundance of grace in this gift being conferred upon them by the simple exercise of their faith. The free gift which came from many offenses being willing borne by the Lord Jesus at the cross, and this gift of righteousness is then imputed by God the Father to every believing sinner who receives Him. Let me ask you now if you have received the righteousness of Christ as a gift? Have you been redeemed from the curse of the law? One man’s righteous act of dying on the cross as a righteous and sinless sacrifice resulted in justification of spiritual life being given to those who were dead in their trespasses and sins.

There is no other man who can redeem you from the curse of the law, except Jesus Christ our Lord. This is because the redemption of your soul was a costly thing. Turn with me over to Psalm 49, verses 5-9. “Why should I fear in the days of evil, when the iniquity at my heels surrounds me?” “Those who trust in their wealth and boast in the multitude of their riches, none of them can by any means redeem his brother, nor give to God a ransom for him—for the redemption of their souls is costly, and it shall cease forever—that he should continue to live eternally and not see the Pit.” You can see here, why it is, that Christ had to undertake on our behalf to become our Savior. It was because no man can by any means redeem his brother or give to God a ransom for his soul. But Christ was no mere man. He was the Son of God; fully God and fully man, and His willingness to become Incarnate and live a perfect and righteous life, and lay down His life a ransom for many, was not only acceptable to God, but it was ordained by God from before the foundation of the world. How precious is the blood of Christ, to be the purchase price; the ransom for our souls. What should be our response? Turn with me over to 1 Peter 1: 17-21. “And if you call on the Father, who without partiality judges according to each one’s work, conduct yourselves throughout the time of your stay here in fear; knowing that you were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver or gold, from your aimless conduct received by tradition from your fathers, but with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish and without spot.” “He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.” If Christ’s death in this precious, then our response ought to be to conduct ourselves throughout our earthly stay, in godly fear. Because, we were not redeemed with corruptible things, like silver and gold, but with the precious blood of Christ. Think upon that every time you are tempted to

sin. Christ suffered and died so that you might be redeemed from the curse of the law. Therefore glorify God in what you do and say, for you are no longer under a curse, but under God's blessing in Christ.

**Now 2ndly - Christ became a curse for us so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.**

Verses 13b and 14 say – “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree, that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.” You can see here that everyone who hangs upon a tree is cursed according to the Old Testament law. And so we now know that Christ out of love to God and all of God's elect people, very willingly went to the cross so as to become a curse for us. This purchase of Christ's brings with it a most certain and definite result, and application. It is, that not only all believing Jews receive the Spirit, but also, even believing Gentiles will receive this same blessing by faith. This is called, “the blessing of Abraham”. You will recall that the blessing which Abraham received was that he was formally justified by God when he believed what God told him in Genesis 15: 6, that his descendants would be as the stars in the heavens for number. This was something that only God could do, and He could only do it through Christ. Abraham received the promises of what God would do for Him through the coming Christ, even when he was first called by God, in Genesis 12: 3. There we read, that “God would bless those who blessed him and would curse those who cursed him, and in him all the families of the earth would be blessed.” This promise of all the blessings of Christ is found at the beginning of his exercise of faith, all the way to the end of his life. The future blessing and present justification were realities to him all through his life from the first moment when he believed in what God would do for him. This promise was confirmed for him especially after he had obeyed God and offered up his son Isaac on the altar. Turn with me over to Genesis 22, verse 10. As a test of Abraham's faith, God calls upon him to offer his son, his only son, as a burnt offering on Mt. Moriah. By faith, Abraham obeyed God when he was called upon to do it, and this great act of faith was evidenced in his obedience because of the reality of the grace of Christ working in his heart. He gets everything ready for this sacrifice, and he binds Isaac to the altar, and in verse 10 it says this: “And Abraham stretched out his hand and took the knife to slay his son.” “But the Angel of the Lord called to him from heaven and said, ‘Abraham, Abraham?’” “So he said, ‘Here I am.’” “And He said, ‘Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him, for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me.’” Now look down to verse 16 – “By myself I have sworn, says the Lord, because you have done this thing, and have not withheld your son, your only son—blessing I will bless you, and multiplying I will multiply your descendants as the stars of the heaven and as the sand which is on the seashore; and your descendants shall possess the gate of their enemies.” “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed, because you have obeyed My voice.”

Notice the words, “In your seed all the nations of the earth shall be blessed.” It was not because of what Abraham did there that all the nations of the earth would be blessed; it was because of what the promised “seed” would do, that they would be blessed. It was Abraham's faith in the promised Christ that brought to him the power of the Spirit's working, the strength to obey, and the assurance that God would bless his offering up his son. He did not really consummate the act of killing Isaac, but God Himself would deliver His only begotten son, our Lord Jesus Christ, the promised Seed, to the cross to become a curse for us. You can see this further if you will turn to Hebrews 11: 17-19. “By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, ‘In Isaac your seed shall be called, concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead, from which he also received him in a figurative sense.’” (or as a type, it says in the NAS) You see, Abraham reasoned in this wise way of believing in what God would do, or could do. His

was to obey, but he obeyed by faith. That was the blessing of Abraham, and that is also the blessing which comes to every New Testament saint; the gift of the Spirit. Ephesian 1: 13 – “In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.” The reason that salvation is by grace through faith and that not of yourself; it is the gift of God, is not only so that no one will boast. It is so that you will see that it took Christ becoming a curse for you, by hanging on the cross for your sins, so that you might receive all the blessings of salvation; justification by faith, and the presence and the work of the Spirit in your life, because you are a purchased possession. You were bought with the precious blood of Christ. See to it then, that you walk by faith in the Son of God; walk in the Spirit, and walk in love. For Christ has died for you, and has given you the blessing of Abraham.