

# What Is the Purpose of the Law?

*Galatians Series*

By Scott Brown

sermonaudio.com

**Bible Text:** Galatians 3:19-4:7

**Preached on:** Sunday, January 24, 2010

## **Hope Baptist Church**

3721 Quarry Road

Wake Forest, NC 27587

**Website:** [www.hopebaptistchurch.info](http://www.hopebaptistchurch.info)

**Online Sermons:** [www.sermonaudio.com/hopebaptistnc](http://www.sermonaudio.com/hopebaptistnc)

It always strikes me how that when someone contracts a serious illness and they need the help of a real professional for some kind of major surgery or something, they often say, "My doctor is the best doctor in the nation." I hear that all the time and I always wonder if it is true. This is the problem with earthly physicians. We never know really how effective they will be. But not with Christ. He is the Great Physician. Now we have before us the words of the Great Physician, the greatest doctor of all who brings all the right remedies to us. One of those remedies He brings is the law. From this text we will learn how the Great Physician is very wise in bringing this very effective medicine to mankind.

By the time we get to the end of this text, as we work our way through it, we will see how kind God is to terrify us with the law. The law terrifies kills and condemns and places a heavy yoke upon you in your pre conversion state. All of these things break forth in blessing for they lead you to sonship.

## **The many purposes of the law**

We need to acknowledge there are different purposes of the law. In 1 Timothy chapter one the apostle Paul says that the law is good if you use it lawfully. He also says that the law killed him. He says in Romans chapter three that whatever the law says, it says so to stop your mouth. Peter calls the law a yoke on your neck. In 2 Corinthians chapter three verse six, we learn that the letter of the law kills. And in Romans 8:2, it is called the ministry of sin and death.

Did Paul and Peter hate the law? Certainly not. The apostle Paul also said that the law is holy, just and good. The Bible tells us that there are many more purposes in the law than these just mentioned.

In Psalm 1, we learn that one purpose of the law is that it will make you prosper. In Psalm 19 it has its purpose in making wise the simple. 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17, says that it is profitable for everything. Psalm 119 it says that the law is designed to make you wiser than your teachers and to make a young man pure and to make you happy. Psalm 119:24 says that it is designed to be your counselor. In verse 32 we learn it

is designed to enlarge your heart. This same Psalm tells us that the law is designed to comfort you in affliction in verse 50, that it written to be your song in the night, verse 54, that it is better than 10,000 coins of silver, that it will make you wiser than your enemies and wiser than your teachers and wiser than the ancients in verses 98 to 100. It says that the law will redeem you from the oppression of man.

Let's make sure that as we think about the law we don't take one verse about the law out of context and nullify all the rest. This is what many simple modern minds are doing in the church today. They have not sought the whole counsel of God on the matter. They have tried to dice the Word of God up rather than to see its unity. David said, "How sweet are Your words to my taste, Sweeter than honey to my mouth!"<sup>1</sup> "O how love I thy law! it is my meditation all the day."<sup>2</sup>

At the same time Paul says that the law is not made for a righteous person. And please don't think this is contradictory. He is just giving a different use of the law. Paul says the law is for the lawless, the insubordinate, for the ungodly, for sinners, for the unholy and profane, for murderers of fathers and murderers of mothers, for manslayers, for fornicators, for sodomites, for kidnappers, for liars, for perjurers. And if there is any other thing contrary to sound doctrine, the law should be used to expose it where Paul said the law is good if it is used lawfully. (1 Timothy 1:8).

So what we find here is that apostle Paul is asking a question in verse 19 and then he is answering it by giving a number of colorful additions to our understanding of the law of God.

These many statements which Paul makes in regards to the law in this passage also need to be understood in the whole context of the book of Galatians. And Galatians chapter three, of course, starts out with a really jarring statement.

"O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?"<sup>3</sup> This is the kind of stabbing language that he uses all through the book. He says, "I am afraid for you,"<sup>4</sup>

Paul is coming with this very jarring and difficult language with the purpose of waking up the Galatians. They were threatened by the Judiazers who were teaching them they could be saved by law keeping. This dangerous teaching would destroy them and Paul is attacking their ministry with ferocity by proving through many arguments that man never was nor never can be justified by the works of the law.

### **Three purposes of Galatians**

---

<sup>1</sup> Psalm 119:103.

<sup>2</sup> Psalm 119:97.

<sup>3</sup> Galatians 3:1.

<sup>4</sup> Galatians 4:11.

Now, I am going to give you three purposes that I can discern from this book for why Paul would be so urgent in his appeals here. I am going to give you three reasons from this chapter.

First, it is written to wake us up to one of the most important lessons of life. Galatians three is written to help us to be jarred awake, to realize that we are completely hopeless without Christ and his righteousness. This means we are not who we think we are. You think you are a good person. You think that you can obey the law. Not true. You can't. You have never been able to obey the law for a day in your whole life. And if you think that your righteousness is based on your being able to keep the law, you are deceiving yourself.

Galatians chapter three is written to teach us this lesson. You are not who you think you are. You are who God declares you to be and you are wretchedly in sin and helpless, hopeless without the righteousness of Christ. Yes, you can be a better husband or a better boy or a better girl. It gets you nowhere regarding salvation.

Yes, God has commanded you to be a better husband. He has commanded you to be a better wife. He has commanded you to be a better boy. But if you think your getting better in one area or another will buy God's favor, you are sorely mistaken.

So Galatians three is written to teach us a lesson about life, a really important lesson about our righteousness.

Secondly, it teaches us that no matter how good you think you are, if you don't have faith you are a condemned sinner because the just shall live by faith.

And then, thirdly, that it is impossible to justify yourself before God. You cannot justify yourself by being more generous or by being more helpful.

So Galatians three is here to show us the absolute absurdity of trying to obtain God's favor by obeying God's laws. We cannot gain God's favor that way. We can't obey enough in order to gain our salvation.

In verses one through five we saw that self justification is impossible and the apostle Paul hounds us with five questions to prove how absurd that idea is. They are not questions that require any in depth thought or analysis.

Question #1: "Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?"<sup>5</sup> The answer is an unequivocal, "absolutely not." All of these questions like this first one. They are rhetorical questions where the answer is obvious to everyone.

So in verses one through five he asks these questions to try to strip away all hope of having our own righteousness. And then he comes in verse six through nine and gives us an example, the example of Abraham. And he says, "Abraham was justified by faith."

---

<sup>5</sup> Galatians 3:2.

The gospel was preached to Abraham in 2000 BC and every person is saved the same way that Abraham was saved. People were never saved by the law. They were only saved by faith.

In verses 10 through 18, we see that Christ has rescued us. He has redeemed us from the curses of the law. And Paul uses many examples in biblical history to prove this. He uses the prophets by quoting Habakkuk chapter two where we read, “The just shall live by faith.”<sup>6</sup> He goes to Moses in Leviticus chapter 19 and he says Moses contradicts this idea that you can be justified by your works. And then he quotes Deuteronomy in verse 13 and he 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’).”<sup>7</sup>

Thus in order to prove that you cannot be justified by the works of the law, Paul quotes Leviticus, the prophets and Deuteronomy. Hence, the law giver himself uses the law to prove that you cannot be justified by the works of the law.

And then in verse 14 he gives the example of Abraham to prove the same point. And so what Paul does to prove this point is that he gives us a span of 2000 years of history. You have to know the history of redemption to understand what the apostle Paul is saying.

Please, parents, teach your children that Abraham lived in 2000 BC, that the law was given around 1445 BC, that David lived in 1000 BC, that the temple was destroyed in 586 BC and Jesus Christ came at the dawn of the new era. And the temple was destroyed in 70 AD.

Those are really important historical events in the history of redemption. You have to understand the history of redemption in order to understand the apostle Paul in Galatians chapter 3.

We have to acknowledge that understanding things pertaining to the law, and harmonizing them is very difficult. Theologians have always debated these things. Paul is saying things that require much study in order to understand. If you are struggling to understand these things remember what Peter said about Paul, “Paul is really hard to understand.”

And what you will find here in this text as I am sure you already have in trying to read it is that you have to think very carefully about it. You have to think comprehensively. You have to know the Word of God in order to understand what he is saying here.

Why would God give us something that was so difficult? Because he desires that our minds would be in conformity with his. He desires that we would set all of our thoughts upon God. And how do we do that? We do that by pursuing him. And so we often don’t understand things because we have not studied the Scriptures. And what we find here is

---

<sup>6</sup> Galatians 3:11.

<sup>7</sup> Galatians 3:13.

that here the apostle Paul has been appointed to a particular work. Ananias the high priest said, “A chosen vessel to declare the doctrine of justification by faith.”

So here we find this great question in verse 19.

**“What purpose then does the law serve?”<sup>8</sup>**

Now I have just given you sort of a panorama of what the Bible says about the law. But now we get more. I have identified eight things here out of this passage that you learn about the purpose or even the nature of the law. It is very rich. Let your mind rest on these things. They are really wonderful.

**First of all, it was added because of transgressions.** This means it was added because of the sinfulness of man and the sinfulness of sin.

When Paul says, “it was added” he is explaining that it was like a roadway that comes in and joins a main road. It is as if justification by faith, as communicated to Abraham in 2000 BC in Genesis 12, is the main road and God has introduced another road from the side called the law to join it. It was added.

That is the idea he is giving here, not that it was new necessarily, but it is something that has come in from the side. We will learn that it was not new at all. It was not new to Moses and it was not new to Abraham, but that it was actually very clear with Adam himself.

But it teaches this idea of the law coming in because of transgression, to intervene, to take care of something that was wrong in mankind. And so what the law did is it convicted the heart and calibrated it regarding the holiness of God and the will of God. It counteracted a seared conscience. Often as we sin, we become insensible to it and the law comes to jab us, to make us bleed so that we can heal. A good physician often has to make you bleed before you can heal. And that is what this physician is doing. The law has come as a physician, as a tool of the Great Physician to counteract the searing of our consciences.

This law was written in stone. It was fixed and solid. It was something that you could calibrate to. It was something that cannot be changed, like a caliper of the soul. It is like the Rosetta Stone that teaches you how to read everything else that is going on in the world. That is what I love about the Word of God. It shows you who you are. It helps you to unpack and discern what the great political movements are doing and saying. It helps to see what is happening in education or business or philosophy. It is the Rosetta Stone that helps you to interpret everything. And that is what the law did. Mankind is sinful and going off in the wrong direction. And so, the law was added because of transgressions.

**And then, secondly, it was fulfilled in Christ.** Not only was it added because of transgressions and to expose sin, but it was also fulfilled in Christ.

---

<sup>8</sup> Galatians 3:19.

“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.”<sup>9</sup>

So he says that it was added till the seed should come. In other words, that there would be some kind of end or change in it. And it is absolutely true what the apostle Paul is teaching. This is difficult to understand unless you read every other thing that is said about the law of God in the Word of God. If you take it to mean that it was added because of transgressions and then the seed came and it became totally irrelevant, then you find yourself confused because of many other texts which say something different—many of them I just read a couple of minutes ago.

And so here Paul is saying that something ended and was abolished when the seed came.

So then we have to ask: What was abolished? What was abolished when Christ came?

Now notice. Paul is very specific here. He is talking about the law that came 430 years after Abraham. He is talking about the specific giving of the law at Mount Sinai. What was given at Mount Sinai that was clearly abolished is the ceremonial law. That’s the answer.

I don’t think you could understand this text at all unless you interpret it that he revoked the ceremonial law. He gave the ceremonial law on Mount Sinai. But if you say that he revoked the moral law then you make Paul and Jesus out to be fools. You have to erase their words and take them out of the Bible. But if you say that it was the ceremonial law that was abolished, then it is very clear because Christ came and was the fulfillment and the abolisher of the entire ceremonial law. Not that the ceremonial didn’t have anything to teach us. It always has something to teach us because Paul says when the law is read and you are converted, the veil comes off and you see Christ and you become like Christ.

So the ceremonial law is good to show you Christ. And when you read it you will see Jesus Christ as 2 Corinthians chapter three so clearly says.

So the law he is talking about is the ceremonial law given at Mount Sinai that Christ fulfilled. And the purpose of the ceremonial law was what? The purpose of the ceremonial law was to point to Christ’s sacrificial death on the cross.

Paul uses the law in different ways in his writing. Sometimes it is obvious he is talking about the ceremonial law. Sometimes he is talking about the moral law. Sometimes he is talking about the entire Old Testament and sometimes he is talking about the 10 Commandments. So we have to look at the context to see what he is talking about.

In this context he is talking to people who are saying that if you are circumcised and if you are good boy then you can be saved. And he is saying, “No. The ceremonial law has been lifted and Christ fulfilled his ceremonial law.”

---

<sup>9</sup> Ibid.

In Matthew chapter five 17 through 20 Jesus makes it very clear that you can know when the law disappears. You can know when you don't see the heavens anymore and there are no children.

But, even though Christ affirmed the perpetuity of the law in Matthew 5:17-20, we also know that the ceremonial law was both fulfilled and revoked by Christ.

### **The law was given long before Moses**

Let's also just make it very clear that the moral law existed long before Moses. You find the law of the sabbath in Genesis chapter one in 4000 BC. You find the law regarding murder in Genesis chapter nine. You find the law of adultery in various places. You find the Fourth Commandment in Genesis 2:3 and Exodus 16. You find the Fifth Commandment in Genesis 37 verse 10. You find the Sixth Commandment in Genesis 4:3-15. You find the Seventh Commandment in Genesis 12:17. You find the Eighth Commandment in Genesis 31 verse 30. You find the Ninth Commandment in Genesis 27:12. You find the 10<sup>th</sup> Commandment in Genesis 6:2.

So the moral law is something that existed from the beginning of the time mankind was on the earth. And then Moses brought it all together and codified it in a very beautiful and clear way to expand on it, to show the nuances, to give us examples to know what the principles of the law were. And then Jesus came and even took it further. Jesus didn't nullify the law. He supersized the law in many ways. He took the law of adultery and he said, "No, it is in your heart." He took the law regarding murder and he said, "No, if you hate your brother you are a murderer."

Jesus didn't take the law and say, "Oh, no, don't pay attention to that."

Jesus said, "Take the law and meditate on it and see how it applies to everything."

This statement in Galatians is not a statement that abrogates the moral law of God.

Now, if you interpret this verse to mean that the law is no longer helpful to you and all you need is the Spirit of God, then you are forced into a boxed canyon. It is a boxed canyon where you can only go one way. You are forced to reject the doctrine of Scripture that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable. What Scripture was Paul talking about? He was talking about the whole Old Testament. You are forced into abrogating 2 Timothy 3:16 and 17 and wiping and expunging it and everything else the Old Testament says.

And you also reject the Lord Jesus Christ himself for the Lord Jesus Christ said, "I came not to abolish, but to fulfill."

So we have to understand the context and the terms of Scripture in order to understand this verse. Christ said:

Do not think that I came to destroy the law or the prophets. I did not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For assuredly, I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle will by no means pass from the law till all is fulfilled. Whoever therefore breaks one of the least of these commandments, and teaches men so, shall be called least in the kingdom of heaven; but whoever does and teaches them, he shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven. For I say to you, that unless your righteousness exceeds the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, you will by no means enter the kingdom of heaven.<sup>10</sup>

And that is why Paul could say, “For I delight in the law of God,”<sup>11</sup> in Romans 7:22. I delight in my inward man.

Why did he delight in it in his inward man? Next week, we will learn the secret and the key to that in 2 Corinthians chapter three.

So you have to reject the way Paul uses the law in all of his writings in order to interpret as abrogating every single aspect of the moral law. Scripture won’t let you be that simplistic. It is just not that simple. You have to use the law the way that the apostle Paul uses the law.

People come to me and say, “What is your view of the law?”

I want to say, “I hope to have the same approach to the law that Paul did.” How did he use the law? I hope to have the same approach that Jesus did. See how Jesus used the law.

In Galatians itself, we see many examples of how Paul used the law. The book of Romans also gives us a clear picture of the way that Paul used the law. Here in Galatians 3, we were constantly going back to the Old Testament because Paul is going to back to Deuteronomy 21. He is going to back to Habakkuk chapter two verse four. He is going back to Leviticus 19. I want to use the law that way. And so should you. And you should appeal to your brothers that they should use the law the same way the apostle Paul and the Lord Jesus Christ did. This nonsense that I don’t need the law anymore is completely contrary to a lawful use of the law.

The apostle Paul thought he needed it and we should do the same.

Charles Simeon said this on the law. “In order to establish the perpetuity of the law as a rule of life, let it be remembered that the law is a perfect transcript of the mind of God. It necessarily arises out of the relation which we bear to him and each other.”

---

<sup>10</sup> Matthew 5:17-20.

<sup>11</sup> Romans 7:22.



John Calvin said, “There were two things which he had undertaken to prove here in Galatians three, that the law is a preparation for Christ and that it is temporal. But here the question is put. Is the law so abolished that we have nothing to do with it?”

You see how Calvin even wrestles with this nuance, this difficulty that we are always faced with. Calvin continues,

“But the question must be put again. Is the law so abolished, is it so abolished that we have nothing to do with it? I answer, the law so far as it is a rule of life, a bridle to keep us in the fear of the Lord, a spur to correct the sluggishness of our flesh, so far, in short, as is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that believers may be instructed in every good work. This law is as much enforced as ever and remains untouched.”

So do you understand the nuance? Calvin can say on the one hand that the law was temporal and a preparation to Christ. So you can say that with all of your heart and rest your whole weight on it. It was temporal and a preparation for Christ. But regarding its applicability in life, it is absolutely applicable everywhere. Those are the two things you have to hold in your mind in order to have a proper understanding of the law.

Let’s don’t be so simple minded in our thinking about the law. God does not give you something simple. He gives you something intentionally difficult. It is like the doctrine of the sovereignty of God. Man acts and God is sovereign. Now you put those two together. You have to hold them together.

J I Packer called that an antinomy which describes the situation where you have two things seemingly contradictory, but they are not. And I think you have to do the same thing with the teaching on the law. It seems contradictory, but it can’t be because all the statements don’t allow it to be.

Simeon continues, “That the law is still a rule of duty to the people of God appears from that injunction of Saint Paul in the 13<sup>th</sup> chapter of Romans.” He is going to Romans 13.

“Owe no man any thing, but to love one another: for he that loveth another hath fulfilled the law.”<sup>12</sup>

Then, specifying the duties contained in the second table of the law as essential constituents of true love he adds, “Love worketh no ill to his neighbor. Therefore Love is the fulfilling of the law,”

Consequently, it is our duty to exercise law. It is our duty to fulfill law which is in all aspects identified in love. For instead of the law being superseded by the Lord Jesus Christ, it is in fact more imperative than ever and comes to us with ten fold obligations.

---

<sup>12</sup> Romans 13:8.

So do you see the nuances and difficulties here? But I think in another way they are easy to understand. In the same way that we can be refreshed by the doctrine of the sovereignty of God and pray that we might fulfill all of God's commandments, we can hold these two things in tension.

**And then, the third purpose of the law, it is in harmony with the promises of God, verse 21.**

Paul says, "Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not!"<sup>13</sup>

And, again, he uses that incredibly emphatic term that you would use to sort of pound the table with. Typically he uses it when people want to wipe the law away. He pounds the table with this: Certainly not, may it never be. And he does it here again.

And what he is saying here is that the promises were always in agreement with the law in this sense. They work hand in hand. The promise that man is justified by faith is living in perfect complementarity with the law that condemns you as a sinner. You are condemned as a sinner. You are told that you must obey every law. You know you can't and so your only hope is to be justified by faith. And that is how the law and faith work together. Even though "the law is not of faith" it does mean that they can't work together for God's purposes.

So faith is not contrary or against the promises of God. And we have to be careful to see the tag team and rhythm that they have, that they work together while serving different purposes. Even though the apostle Paul says the law is not of faith, the two still are not contradictory to one another. They work together.

**And then, the fourth purpose of the law, or the fourth quality of the law: It does not give life.** And it can only mean that it doesn't give eternal life because all over Scripture we know that it does give a certain kind of life. In fact, the scripture in Psalm 1 says that the law is like a river of water of life. The scripture teaches that, when you meditate on it and you obey it, it brings forth fruit in its season. So it is life on earth, but it is not life in heaven. It doesn't buy you favor with God. It doesn't earn you a place in the kingdom of heaven. But it does give certain quality of light and life to the believer. But Paul also says it does not give eternal life.

"For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law."<sup>14</sup>

He is talking about eternal life. It is that kind of life the law can never give. That is why Jesus said in John 6 that it is the Spirit who gives life. The flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit and they are life.

---

<sup>13</sup> Galatians 3:21.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

And here I think Jesus is talking actually about both in one sentence. He is bringing together eternal life and then the blessings of life. The blessings in Deuteronomy and the cursings of Deuteronomy are similar, but they are also different. The blessings have much to do about life in this earth. The cursings have something to do with life on this earth and they have to do with heavenly things as well. I believe that they have a dual meaning. The law can curse you on earth here and now and they are also capable of condemning you to throw you into hell for all eternity. In the same way the law can bless you here and now, and it can show you are a sinner in need of the righteousness of God that qualifies you for heaven.

So the law does not give eternal life.

**The fifth thing that the law does is that it confines unbelievers under sin, 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.”<sup>15</sup>

And here is this idea of the law confining you, in a sense, imprisoning you. The law so terrifies you for its consequences that it constrains you. It teaches you to hate sin or want to avoid it.

One of the things I am so thankful for is that as a young man God gave me, before I was converted, a fear of certain things. I was fearful of being with certain young ladies. It just terrified me. And it was the law of God working in my heart before I was converted that kept me away from evil women. I was not a believer at all. But God placed a fear in my heart that I wouldn't sin in that way and I had a terror of it. And so he preserved me from that in my youth. The law was such a blessing, but it was a prison. It just terrified me. It didn't get me any help or life. It just kept me from destroying myself. And that is what he is saying here is that it constrains you. The law is like a jail keeper that keeps you from destruction.

When youth want to throw off the bonds of the law of God they need to know that they are on the path of their own destruction. The law of God is there for you even if you do not believe. Even if you are not a believer here today as a young person or an old person, obey the law of God because it will keep you hemmed in. It will constrain you. It will confine you in a good way that will be a blessing to you. If you ever are converted you will look back and be so thankful that you were terrified by the law of God.

And so the law keeps us imprisoned until we come to Christ. It is like a jail keeper that protects us from personal destruction. He keeps us from running wild in the world and then holds us in so that our passions are constrained.

G G Findley says this. “The law was all the while standing guard over its subjects watching and checking every attempt to escape, but intending to hand the mover in due time to the charge of faith. The law posed its ordinances like so many sentinels around

---

<sup>15</sup> Galatians 3:22.

the prisoner's cell. The cordon is complete. He tries again and again to break out. The iron circle will not yield. The day of faith approaches. It dawned long ago in Abraham's promise. Even now it shines into his dungeon and he hears the word of Jesus, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee. Go free.' Law, the stern jailer has, after all, been a good friend if it has reserved for him this. It prevents the sinner from escaping to a futile and elusive freedom."

Oh, that we had listened to the law more when we were young. Oh, that we had listened and stopped our drug abuse, our licentiousness. Oh, that if we had only listened. Where would we be today? We know that is so true. But at the same time we hear the voice of Jesus Christ.

"You cannot be justified by keeping that law. You are free, brother. Enter into my rest. Come out of the prison and I will save you and you will be mine and I will put a new heart in you and I will justify you by your faith alone because you never could be saved by your law keeping. But you were given the law to keep you in its prison so that you wouldn't destroy your life."

Isn't it amazing how God is so merciful? He gives us the law in our pre conversion state and then he gives us his grace and his Spirit afterwards. And he does not give up on us.

And then in verse 23, he really continues and flourishes this same principle as he shows us that the law keeps unbelievers under guard. Not only that before faith came we were "kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed."<sup>16</sup>

The word "kept" is a very strong word, that means, "a watcher in advance to protect." The emphasis is upon constraint and we were kept.

Please read 1 Corinthians 10 in order to prove this with many illustrations that Paul gives there. If someone asks you, "How should we use the law?" turn to 1 Corinthians 10. 1 Corinthians 10 will say that we should use the law to teach us not to be idolaters. And that is a good example. Paul use of the law in 1 Corinthians 10 is giving the example of how this works. The idolatries in the wilderness, the idolatries in Israel are exposed in the Old Testament. Pauls point is this: read the Old Testament so you will see what an idolater you are. That is the guardianship, the being kept, by the law. To be kept from the idolatries of the Gentiles is one of the marvelous things of the law. And to be kept and governed in our worship and our discipline and our government and our lifestyle, to keep the false religions out, to destroy everything raised up against Christ. The law is for that.

Spurgeon says, "The law is meant to lead the sinner to Christ. It is the black dog to fetch the sheep to the shepherd. It is the burning heat which drives the traveler to the shadow of the great rock in a weary land." He says it shows us our great need.

---

<sup>16</sup> Galatians 3:23.

The law is the surgeon's knife which cuts out the proud flesh that the wound may heal. The law, by itself sweeps and raises the dust, but the gospel spreads and sprinkles clean water upon the dust and all is well in the chamber of the soul. The law kills, the gospel makes alive. The law strips and then Christ comes in and robes the soul with glory.

All the commandments and all the types direct us to Christ if we will but heed their evident intent. They wean us from self. They put us off from false self righteousness and they bring us to know that only Christ can be our help. So the law provides such a marvelous help to us as a guard.

And then, next, the law is our tutor. This is the same idea.

“Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ.”<sup>17</sup>

This is the idea of a pedagogue, a teacher. A pedagogue was a Roman caretaker who took care of children and brought them up and he would hold the children in check. And so Paul is taking us to this imagery in Roman culture, to the function of a pedagogue, of someone who takes care of children and brings them up.

Paul is likening us to children. In our preconversion state we are like children. And so he is treating us this way in our preconversion state that we are under a tutor and the tutor was designed to teach the obligations that we have. And so the law teaches us our obligations to God.

There are two tables of the law. The first table of the law explains our obligations toward God. The second table of the law, marks out our obligations to mankind. That is what the law was intending to show. This is the idea of a leader of children. He is leading children by the hand. He is taking children somewhere. Through his admonitions and his threatenings he is taking them by the hand to Christ. That is the idea. The pedagogue is leading the sinner, the child, to Christ. That is his purpose.

He is constraining him. He is holding him at bay. He is imprisoning him. And then he is leading him to Christ so that he will be set free.

But after faith has come, you are no longer under a tutor. Does that mean that the law is totally meaningless after the days of tutoring? Does that mean that now everything you were taught is now rejected. Does it mean an end to all the grammar, and punctuation, and all the things you learned and memorized? No. That is not what Paul is saying. Paul is not abrogating the law by saying you are no longer under the things you were taught by your tutor. He is saying in your preconversion state you were under a tutor and when you come to Christ it is different. It is not that you wipe out the moral law, but something happens in your heart that makes you desire to fulfill all the law that the tutor has given you.

---

<sup>17</sup> Galatians 3:24.

That is why in Ray Comfort's ministry's primary foundational principle is: Use the law to convict of sin and then use the gospel to set free. That is a right use of the law for the unconverted.

But the converted have a different way. The converted read Moses (2 Corinthians 3) and their hearts are opened up and they see Christ. That is what the converted do with the law. They are not saved by it, but they are blessed in their hearts by it.

This analogy I am about to give, breaks down a little bit if you take it too far, but I will give you an illustration.

My son has walked by my side since he was eight years old. He has barely left my side since he was eight. And he was under a tutor. He was under a highly directed tutor. He was under, sometimes, a harsh tutor that restrained him from many things that he wanted. My guess is that if he had his way when he was nine there would be 19 four wheelers on this property. Yet, I restrained him from them in his youth for bigger purposes. There are a number of particular things that were part of the restraint of the tutor, the pedagogue, the meanie that held him in prison.

But now it is different. In this sense he is no longer under a tutor. He is being transferred out of this tutorship. And now everything that he has learned is coming to fruition. Now things that I used to say to him that may make him chafe, he is now repeating to other people as his own. He doesn't need a tutor anymore. He has Christ and he has all those laws. He hasn't thrown off the tutor in that sense, but something has changed. And that is what salvation changes with the believer. It changes so that the heart desires it, so that the heart says, "Oh, how I love thy law," so that you say with Paul, "I delight in my inward parts toward the law of God." You desire to do it. You know you can't keep it. It only makes you humbler the more you know about it. That is the kind of law that we are talking about.

It is a wonderful law because it is a tutor to show you the way you should go in your preconversion days. But then once Christ enters your heart you are no longer under that same kind of tutor. But it doesn't mean that you erase the whole Old Testament and 80 percent of what the apostle Paul and Jesus said. That is not what it means. You don't forsake the alphabet. You don't forsake the grammar. You don't forsake the principles. It means graduation. It means that you freely use those skills that you were given and you continue to acquire more. That is what it means to no longer be under a tutor.

If you think that being no longer on a tutor means you don't need to read your Bible anymore and you don't need the Old Testament anymore, you cannot agree with Paul and Jesus in many, many things. Is that clear? Do we get this?

So consider the law in one sense like you were in your preconversion classroom. And then you graduate and when you graduate you are no longer subject to the penalties of the law. You are no longer under a threatening tutor. Your heart cries out, "Abba, Father." We will get to that in a minute. Your evil is not constrained by the law, but by the love

of Christ. You are like the one who says, “If you love me, you will keep my commandments.” You are no longer guarded by the law in the old sense. But now you have a circumcised heart that cannot produce righteousness, but the Spirit uses it to produce righteousness. It is an instructor that cannot change us, but the Spirit can change us and lead us and enlighten us into its meaning when we read Moses. For whenever Moses is read, the veil is taken off. Whenever Moses is read by a converted person the veil is taken off and the heart cries with joy at the seeing of these wonderful things from the law.

So he is talking about that moment when we believe in Christ which changes everything forever and the essence of the change is that you become a son through faith and that takes us to verse 26.

**This is the final purpose of the law that Paul shows us in this text. The law works in such a way to make you a son.**

“For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”<sup>18</sup>

And so the only people in the world who enjoy the true fatherhood of God are those who have faith. And then they receive new clothing like a prodigal son who has a robe brought to him. He says, “Here, you are clothed with Christ. You become a son. He gives you his robe. He gives you his robe to make you clean. It is a robe of blood and sacrifice. But it is a robe that cleanses you from all of your unrighteousness. And that is why he says, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”<sup>19</sup> And then he says that you are included as a son in verse 27.

“There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”<sup>20</sup>

So the moment you have faith you are one with all of the believers in the world. And Paul is making this argument in Galatians that the Jews and the Gentiles need to understand that there is one faith and one Lord and one baptism and this is a revolutionary, amazing text here that it destroys racial boundaries. It destroys all social boundaries. It destroys gender boundaries. It destroys racism. Racism is one of the most evil contradictions to justification by faith. If you want a proof text to destroy racism here is your text because racism is opposite to justification by faith.

How does this fit that only men can hold offices in the church and women cannot teach men? Does this contradict that women are to be silent in the church? This text has nothing to do with the roles and responsibilities of male and female. This doesn't erase Genesis one through three. This doesn't erase the whole book of 1 Timothy. This doesn't erase everything that is said about man and woman. What this says is that when you are

---

<sup>18</sup> Galatians 3:26.

<sup>19</sup> Galatians 3:27.

<sup>20</sup> Galatians 3:28.

justified by faith there are no boundaries, racial or gender or any other kind of boundaries with anyone in the world who also trusts in Christ.

The Judaizers are saying, “No, you have got to be of the direct lineage of Abraham.”

And Paul is saying, “You don’t have to be the direct lineage of anybody but Jesus.” And that is what this is about. Your salvation has nothing to do with your family or your race. It has to do with Jesus and his blood shed on the cross that makes all one.

It is interesting that Paul changes his language. He starts talking about you. He makes it very personal. You are all sons of God through faith.

“For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”<sup>21</sup>

You are all one in Christ Jesus. He speaks like a father to a son.

So all of these threatenings of the law are for a purpose. The guard in the prison, the tutoring, they are all for one purpose, to bring you to Christ so you will see your sins and the law will bring you by the hand, by his threatenings and his judgments to lead you to the Lord Jesus Christ who will cleanse you from all of your sins and clothe you with his own righteousness.

And then he says, “You are heirs according to the promise.”<sup>22</sup>

“And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s seed.”<sup>23</sup>

Oh, now we know what Abraham’s seed is again. It is not genealogy. It is spirit, the law of the spirit of life that is in Christ Jesus that sets you free from the law of sin and death. That is the seed of Abraham. And if you are of that seed, then you are Christ’s and heirs according to the promise.

So justification makes you an heir. That means that everything that God has ever promised is yours. Every single thing that God promised Abraham is yours. You are heirs according to the promise.

And the mistake that some versions of Dispensationalism make is that it makes the seed of Abraham a racial thing. So this gives us a common heritage with all those who have believed since the beginning of time, those in the future.

And then he says that we were redeemed to be sons, chapter four verse one. The chapter markings are not inspired. They were added later and he continues the thought in chapter four.

---

<sup>21</sup> Galatians 3:27.

<sup>22</sup> Galatians 3:29.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.



Now I say that the heir, as long as he is a child, does not differ at all from a slave, though he is master of all, but is under guardians and stewards until the time appointed by the father.<sup>24</sup>

Here is the doctrine of election. There is a time appointed by the Father for the scales of your eyes to fall off and you will be saved. It is always in his time. We ought always to a message of urgency to the unconverted that they need to be saved, that today is the day of salvation. At the same time we know that there is only a time appointed by the Father that they can be saved.

“Even so we,” verse three, “when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world.”<sup>25</sup>

In other words, we thought that we could be justified by our works. We were shining ourselves up, making ourselves cooler than cool to try to be justified before man and God. That is being under bondage to the elements of the world, trying to justify yourself by your own works. That is bondage.

Verse four:

But when the fullness of the time had come, God sent forth His Son, born of a woman, born under the law, to redeem those who were under the law, that we might receive the adoption as sons. And because you are sons....<sup>26</sup>

Now, read this very slowly. Please look, verse six. This is the heart of this text, brothers and sisters. This is where the whole text is driving to now. You are here now. You are here at the reason he said everything he said. And he says this.

God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying out, "Abba, Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave but a son, and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.<sup>27</sup>

So why all these things from the law? Why has he told us so many things about the law? He has told us that it was added because of transgressions. He has told us that it was fulfilled in Christ, that it is in harmony with the promises of God, that it doesn't give life, that it confines the unbeliever under sin, that it keeps unbelievers under guard, that it is a tutor to bring us to Christ and it leads us to sonship.

So what is he saying? He is saying that the law is given so that you are led to believe, and when you have faith, the Spirit of God enters into your heart and that Spirit, that new presence in your life you never had before, cries out in your heart and it says, “Abba,

---

<sup>24</sup> Galatians 4:1-2.

<sup>25</sup> Galatians 4:3.

<sup>26</sup> Galatians 4:4-6.

<sup>27</sup> Galatians 4:6-7.

Father,” and you do the same thing. It gives a cry you could never have before. And it shows you that you love God.

If your spirit is crying out, “Abba, Father,” and you know you can’t be justified by your law keeping and you believe in Jesus Christ and your spirit is calling out, “Oh, Lord, Abba, Father,” I dare say you have been saved.

“The Spirit bears witness with our spirit that we are the sons of the God.”

So why the law? Why? So that you would have the Spirit in your heart that would cry out things you never could cry out before that would say, “Oh, Father, I love you. Oh, Father, not my will but thine be done. Oh, Father, I delight to do thy will.” That is why he gave you the law. He put something in your heart that would never stop feeding life into your soul in making you happy and helping you.

Now, one final text. I have been referring to it over and over again. We will read it briefly and then we will go over it extensively next Sunday.

Turn to 2 Corinthians chapter three. In 2 Corinthians chapter three the apostle Paul is speaking of the work of the Spirit in someone’s heart. There is so much in here. He is asking, who is able to live the Christian life? No one. We are not sufficient in and of ourselves, but our sufficiency is of Christ. In other words, Christ is able. Christ is able to live his life in you. And so he says, “Our sufficiency is from God to be ministers of the new covenant.”<sup>28</sup>

And then he tells a story of Moses and he calls it the ministry of death. Moses came down from the mountain and his face was glowing and he had to have a veil over his face so that the glory of the Lord would be hidden.

And then he tells us why that happened and he tells us why we must read Moses. He tells us why it is so good for us.

So here we go, verse, 11, again. Paul is often hard to understand as you will see in this text.

“For if what is passing away was glorious...”<sup>29</sup>

And he is talking about the glory of the Lord fading from Moses’ face. He came down from the mountain and the glory faded.

For if what is passing away was glorious, what remains is much more glorious.

---

<sup>28</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:6.

<sup>29</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:11.

Therefore, since we have such hope, we use great boldness of speech—unlike Moses, who put a veil over his face so that the children of Israel could not look steadily at the end of what was passing away.<sup>30</sup>

Something was passing away.

But their minds were blinded. For until this day the same veil remains unlifted in the reading of the Old Testament, because the veil is taken away in Christ. But even to this day, when Moses is read, [that is a real interpretive key to this passage], when Moses is read, a veil lies on their heart. Nevertheless when one turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away. Now the Lord is the Spirit; and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with unveiled face, beholding as in a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, just as by the Spirit of the Lord.<sup>31</sup>

Do you see how the two things are here in this text that we have been talking about? We have seen in Galatians that the law, it terrifies you and condemns you and it leads you like a tutor to Christ. And then when he comes, your spirit cries out, “Abba, Father.” And that is what this is right here, you read the Old Testament and you see Christ and you see him in his glory. The images, the shadows come to life because you also know Christ and he takes those laws through the Holy Spirit and shows you Christ.

And so these are the two great purposes of the law, to condemn sinners, to lead them to Christ, to take them by the hand to the feet of Jesus so that they could cry out, “Abba, Father.”

Will you pray with me?

*Oh Lord, thank you for your work in our hearts to make us cry out, “Abba, Father,” to say, “Oh, how I love thy law,” to say, “I delight to do thy will.” Oh, thank you, Lord, for giving us these things, you, the Great Physician bringing the right medicines, the right knives, the right equipment, the right teachers to bring us to Jesus Christ. Amen.*

---

<sup>30</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:11-13.

<sup>31</sup> 2 Corinthians 3:14-18.