

5.12.2024

Chapter 3 – No Understanding with Man

Unable to Grasp the Obvious (vs.1-9)

The Obvious Downfall of Working for Justification (vs.10-12)

Galatians 3:10-12: For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, "CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM." Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH." However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM."

In so many respects, this is such an important book because it's dealing with faith, but it's also dealing with works. In many respects, as we have within the text and have given you as an outline, there is a dichotomy against those two: faith and works. Man insists that he can work his way to heaven. If you were to ask most people, "Are you going to heaven?" They'd go, "Yeah, I'm a pretty good guy." And we would answer, "Not good enough." Because as Scripture says, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. Sin, by its very definition according to the Scripture, is not as much what you do wrong as what you don't do right. So, it literally means according to the Greek word, you missed the mark. What is the mark? Well, the mark is the glory of God; the perfection of God. So, though you may have done some good things this past week, you weren't perfect this week. Scripture reminds us of this over and over again, as Ecclesiastes says, there's not a man on the face of the earth that continually does what is right. "All have sinned and fall short of the glory God. There's none righteous. No, not one."

If you look with me in Romans 3, that particular point is made extremely clear, as Paul begins to write in Romans 3:10,

"THERE IS NONE RIGHTEOUS, NOT EVEN ONE;

(Romans 3:11) THERE IS NONE WHO UNDERSTANDS,
THERE IS NONE WHO SEEKS FOR GOD;

(Romans 3:12) ALL HAVE TURNED ASIDE, TOGETHER THEY HAVE BECOME USELESS;
THERE IS NONE WHO DOES GOOD,
THERE IS NOT EVEN ONE.”

It then goes on and says in verse 19,

“Now we know that whatever the Law says, it speaks to those who are under the Law, so that every mouth may be closed...”

His point is that there's actually a purpose of the Law. Our thoughts were, “The reason that God gave us the Law was so that we can become perfect. So, we'll do the Law and we'll become perfect people.” And God says, “No, no, I gave you the Law to show you can't do the Law. That's the reason I gave you the Law.”

It actually says within the passage, “Every mouth may be closed.” That's what the Law does.

“... and all the world may become accountable to God;

(Romans 3:20) because by the works of the Law no flesh will be justified in His sight...”

Not only can you not do everything good and gracious, but you don't have the right motives. Your heart's wrong, and I hate to tell you, but God judges the motives and intent of the heart so that we have all failed. Nevertheless, man continues to go back to that fundamental desire, and he's built literally religions around it. “I think I can do this.” I think one of the reasons why man pursues the Law to such a degree is that people like to look impressive. They like to wow other people and they like to squash the competition, and he works for applause, praise and for the recognition and reward of man. His desire is to be unique; distinct. So, man begins to compete in the particular realm of religion and wants to always look better than somebody else. So, he embraces, strangely enough, the law. He embraces works. “I can do good. I'm a do-gooder” type thing. He pursues those things, and his perception is “If I do enough good, it will somehow outweigh the bad that I've done, and obviously, I'll be accepted by God in heaven.” This is not a new idea. If you actually thought, “Hey, that was my idea.” It's been around for a long time.

If you were to go all the way back to Luke 10 in particular, you'll see guys like the Pharisees and Scribes doing the same thing. Here again, it's the difference between our faith and religion. We are not religion. Religion is more works oriented. It's man proving himself to be worthy. Good luck with that. However, faith is our trust in God. So, one of the things that Paul is doing in Galatians in particular, is he's demonstrating that clear dichotomy, the difference between faith and works. In other words, faith says, “It's all God.” Works says, “It's all me.” And there's nothing in between. I mean, it can't be part God and part me. So, you come to a passage such as Luke 10, and wouldn't you know it, lawyers have a way of looking at the fine print and maybe

even writing out the fine print. A lawyer comes up to Jesus and he begins to question Him. This is the question that he poses, if you look with me in Luke 10:25,

“And a lawyer stood up and put Him to the test, saying, “Teacher, what shall I do to inherit eternal life?”

That's a good question, isn't it? “What do I have to do to get there?” I can tell you this, that most people, if they found out what they had to do, they would just do the bare minimum. Nevertheless, Jesus said to him, “Well, what's written in the Law?” In other words, “Obviously, because you're thinking that you can earn your way to heaven, let's go to the Law, because that's where you want to earn your reward.”

How does it read to you, verse 27?

“And he answered, “YOU SHALL LOVE THE LORD YOUR GOD WITH ALL YOUR HEART, AND WITH ALL YOUR SOUL, AND WITH ALL YOUR STRENGTH, AND WITH ALL YOUR MIND; AND YOUR NEIGHBOR AS YOURSELF.”

(Luke 10:28) And He said to him, “You have answered correctly; DO THIS AND YOU WILL LIVE.””

Who can do that? Scripture says that if you have bad feelings in your heart towards somebody, that you've actually hated them, then it's the same as murder in your heart.

Nevertheless, verse 29, lawyers do what lawyers do, right? Lawyers use the semantic gymnastics to rationalize where they're coming from to justify through their legalese.

(Luke 10:29) “But wishing to justify himself...”

That is to say, realizing that maybe he hasn't done it completely the way it should have been done because there are some people that he really doesn't like, but there's people that he really likes that he doesn't mind being really kind to.

“But wishing to justify himself, he said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?””

It actually depends on what it means, right? “Who is my neighbor?” Hopefully, I can technically be good.

So, Jesus says, “Let Me tell you a story.” So, that's when Jesus gives the story of the Good Samaritan. Interestingly enough, of course, as the lawyer is a Jewish lawyer, He gives them a story of a Levite and there was a priest. They passed by a guy on the road to Jericho, and he's heading to Jerusalem, and this guy has been beat up and he's laid for dead, and they, the Levite and the priest, both passed by, but the Samaritan... “A Samaritan? Oh, nobody likes Samaritans. Samaritans aren't good people” But the Samaritan stopped, and he cared for this man. Jesus turns and He goes, “Who was good? Who did the right thing?” The point of the story is that you

and I don't always think right, and there are certain people that we disdain, and we would not show kindness to. By the works of the Law, no flesh should be justified in His sight. We still tenaciously hold on to the sense of, "But I think I can do it." And God says, "Ok, let's see." And then when He begins to show us particular passages, we go, "Well, what exactly does He mean by that?" And we begin to play the whole lawyer card in that particular relationship.

There's a passage in Luke 16, if you look with me, since we're also in the Gospel of Luke, and one of the other antics that we find ourselves in as we pursue being good. This particular setting in Luke 16, the Pharisees who were religious leaders, it says in verse 14, "were lovers of money." Religious leaders, really?

(Luk 16:14) "Now the Pharisees, who were lovers of money, were listening to all these things and were scoffing at Him."

Jesus was actually giving them a story that proclaimed, "It's really better to make friends than to have a lot of money." And they started laughing about it, making fun of it, obviously scoffing at Him.

(Luke 16:15) "And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men...""

That's the works the Law. "Ok, so how am I going to do it? Well, I could use legalese to make it happen, because I know that I'm not good enough. So, I'll try to maybe use semantics, or I could justify myself in the sight of men." In other words, how would you do that? Well, you know those sins that God has a way of just reminding us of in Scripture, but we're not really good at obeying the rules in that regard? So, what we like to do is we like to diminish those sins, and then we exalt the ones that we're really good at, so that we find a way to say, "Well, that's not really important, but this is." Now the question is, in this particular setting, what's really important to the Pharisees? Money. What isn't important? People.

"And He said to them, "You are those who justify yourselves in the sight of men, but God knows your hearts; for that which is highly esteemed among men is detestable in the sight of God."

It sounds like God has different standards than we do. I think one of the reasons why people think they're so good is because they're going by their standards. According to this particular chapter, money is perceived as unrighteous according to verse 9. Verse 10, it seems to be a very little thing in the sight of God, and very important to man. Then, according to verse 11, true riches is really the relationships, but man doesn't really perceive it that way.

(Luke 16:16) "The Law and the Prophets were proclaimed until John; since that time the gospel of the kingdom of God has been preached, and everyone is forcing his way into it."

In other words, man is trying to figure out a way to get into the kingdom of God by virtue of his efforts. His efforts are proving themselves to be full of faults; inability to really do what they are set up to do. What they find themselves is either making excuses or diminishing the things that are really important, and they choose the latter in this particular context. Jesus goes, "Don't think that any part of the Law will be ignored by God." How does He state that?

(Luke 16:17) "But it is easier for heaven and earth to pass away than for one stroke of a letter of the Law to fail."

So, for those of us who like to rationalize or justify or in some way say, "That's really not important." God goes, "It's all important." And how does He remind them of this? It's a very interesting passage, because it's kind of an obscure verse, in verse 18, that you wouldn't think that He would inject in this particular text, but His phrase is,

(Luke 16:18) "Everyone who divorces his wife and marries another commits adultery, and he who marries one who is divorced from a husband commits adultery."

You go, "Why is He even talking about this? We've been talking about money." I'm going to tell you why, because the Pharisees would divorce their wives for almost anything. If they burned a meal, they would divorce their wives. They thought nothing about discarding people. Money was important. I mean, an ox fell on a ditch, you can pull it out on the Sabbath, no problem, but somebody that really needs help, you don't have time for them; it's not that important. In other words, "What is a life worth? What is the relationship worth? What is my wife worth to me?" And Jesus, by just one simple phrase, says, "You do know how important relationships are to God?" I mean virtually to commit adultery was a capital punishment according to the Law. God begins to reveal the things that man diminishes as insignificant, God says, are very important, and you don't see things clearly because you don't want to. If in fact you think you can do all the Law, you better make sure that you can do every bit of the Law, if that's the way you're going to go.

There's another passage found in Luke 18, it reads this way in verse 9,

"And He also told this parable to some people who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and viewed others with contempt."

That's another thing that we began to use, if in fact we feel like we can be pretty good. You know one of the greatest ways to prove how wonderful you are, how good you are? Compare yourself with somebody that really is not wonderful at all. Find somebody that really looks bad and then put yourself right next to him and go, "I'm a really good person."

(Luke 18:10) "Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector."

(Luke 18:11) “The Pharisee stood and was praying this to himself: ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other people: swindlers, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector.

(Luke 18:12) ‘I fast twice a week; I pay tithes of all that I get.’”

That's another thing you might want to do. You might want to do some really showy stuff, things that are external and overt gestures to show how wonderful you are. Give really big checks so people can see it and that will make you look a lot better too.

(Luke 18:11) “But the tax collector, standing some distance away, was even unwilling to lift up his eyes to heaven, but was beating his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, the sinner!’

(Luke 18:14) “I tell you, this man went to his house justified...”

You think you can justify yourself by your works? I don't think it's going to happen. That's fundamentally the point of Galatians 3, as we come into verses 10-12; as we begin to see Paul going, “I don't think you want to go there.” Now once again, there is this sense of, “Well, it looks impressive. I can wow the audience. I can squash the competition, especially if they're a lot worse than I am, and I can exalt myself, and, I think, probably one of the reasons why I would like the whole performance thing.” But I would say that there are two fundamental problems in this. The problem is, number one, that man isn't the one you need to impress. That's a pretty big problem. The second problem is, is that works don't seem to impress God. I mean, just think about it. It shouldn't take you long. What could you possibly do that would impress God? So, you really want to go the works route? So, it is for this reason that Paul begins to deal with the Galatians, who are very much performance oriented, very competitive in what they're doing and trying to show themselves to be far more righteous. Obviously, everybody wants to look better than somebody else. I mean, it's all about saving face, right? “We're better than that person.”

Galatians 3:10 gives us the warnings of heading in that direction, and it reads this way,

“For as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse; for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO DOES NOT ABIDE BY ALL THINGS WRITTEN IN THE BOOK OF THE LAW, TO PERFORM THEM.”

See the word “perform” there, that's directly connected to Law? Yeah, it's pretty clear. If you look at the beginning of verse 10, the wording is a little bit different, but in the Greek it's a little bit clearer. The phrase itself makes reference to those who seem to earn their righteousness by works. So, when he says, “For as many as are the works of the Law,” for as many as those who are pursuing works to justify themselves is fundamentally the point. We know that if you back up into verse 9, it reads,

“So, then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer.”

There are those that are by faith, and there are those that are pursuing and perceiving that by working really hard, doing really good stuff that somehow, they're going to attain justification. The problem, if you look in verse 10, is that you have something with the Law that people maybe haven't thought about, and that thing is called the curse. The Law is an interesting animal. I think we kind of have a love/hate relationship with the Law. If you look at TV shows, people like police in the TV shows and then you watch another show, and they're rooting for the bad guy. I'm going, “It's kind of a love/hate thing.” But man perceives that he can do really good, and he doesn't really think through what the Law really offers him. I don't know, maybe some of you have experienced something to the contrary, but I'm pretty sure that the police, the mayor, the governor, most people have not walked up to you and go, “You're just such a great, great citizen. How wonderful you are.” And offered you a lot of money for being a great citizen and obeying the law. If you've been a great citizen all your life, but you disobey the law today, let's say you decide to rob a bank, nothing major, shoot somebody, but you decided to do something bad today, guess what? All the good that you've ever done in your whole life is out the window. Now, you're held accountable and you're going to stand before a judge and you're going to do time. There's going to be a penalty. There's a curse always with the law. The law is always and ever ready to convict you, that's what the law does, and that's the great motivation of the law. The great motivation of the law is, “You do something wrong, we're going to lock you up or fry you, but we're going to get you out of the picture.” That's the way it works. Paul says, “Are you sure you want to go the work of the Law? Are you sure you want to go that way? Because the penalty and the punishment, I mean, this could be severe and it's always looming over you.” The second thing that he puts in is just an interesting short phrase in verse 11,

“Now that no one is justified by the Law...”

We actually read that in Romans 3 as well.

“Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident...”

He uses an aphorism in this particular context and gets kind of pithy in his way of discussing this, I would say a borderline snarky, because what Paul is basically saying is, “Look, you're good enough? Really, you think you're good enough? I mean, that you're not good enough is evident.” And all you have to do is go into Scripture. I mean, the most righteous man that walked the face of the earth, when he stood before God goes, “I close my mouth. I'm wicked.” One of the greatest prophets that ever lived, Isaiah, when he comes in the presence of God goes, “My lips are unclean. I have no idea what I'm talking about.” So, just go through Scripture. Not only is there none righteous, no, not one, the most righteous ones are conveying none of

us are even close to God. You can't do this on your own. You can't do it, and it's one of the great problems, the obvious downfall of working for justification is it's not going to happen.

My oldest son, now in his mid 40s, but I certainly remember the times when he was just a little guy. He always liked to do things himself, and a lot of times I would have them do things with me. Our kids enjoyed working with their dad. So, we would do things together and I would show him how to do something, and he would do it. Maybe a little rake or something and rake the yard. I remember one day in particular, I was loading concrete blocks, and he's like 4 years old and he goes, "Daddy, I want to do that." I said, "Son, you can't load the concrete blocks." "I want to do it." I said, "Ok. Go ahead." He's there, making all the noises and everything; getting frustrated. You want to know why God gave you the Law? Because you said you could do it, and God goes, "Ok. Do it. Do it." Because what the Law does is it reveals that we can't do it, and that's why Romans 3 says that every mouth would be closed. Jesus even says within the text, "I tell you, every jot and every tittle." You think you can do every jot and every tittle? "Son, when you get finished picking up the block, I want you to put them together and I want you to build a building." It's not going to happen, and it's what God is doing for us so that we might open our eyes. Man is still bent on, "I think I can be good." And God says, "You can't be this good. There's just no way." An old evangelist says you've got to get people lost before you can get them saved. The point is people have to realize that there's no way that they can earn their way into heaven. They have to come to One who will literally do it for them. My son looked at me, and I said, "Let me pick up the block." And I pick it up and I put it in there. He realized that the only way that block was going to get in that truck is if Dad picked it up, and that's what I began to realize in my own life.

His point is "that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, **THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH.**"

He actually takes that verse out of Habakkuk, and if you know anything about Habakkuk, you begin to realize that at that particular time, the Chaldeans were coming in, and they were going to take Israel and put them in captivity. Israel, the nation of God had not obeyed the Law. The point of the text is, obviously, you're not going to make it in by doing the Law, because that's put you in captivity. Your acts have put you in captivity. The only one that can be righteous is by putting their trust in God, letting God do it; believing God to do the work that you can't do. "The just shall live by faith." Paul will use that verse in Romans 1 as well, and here it is found in this particular passage, which is reminding us that you can't do it, but God can. God's going to do the great work.

The last thing that he says in verse 12 is,

“However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.””

Now, that's actually a quote from Leviticus 18 which is, here again, like the man that comes to Jesus, the lawyer, “What good thing must I do to enter into eternal life?” He goes, “Ok, but just understand this, that if you're going that route, you have to do everything, and that will give you life, but if you can't, you want to come back to Me and trust Me to do it for you.” The point of the passage is, the performance, your salvation, your life, your eternal life, are you really comfortable with how good you are? Do you feel so comfortable that you're going to bet your eternal life on it? Are you so good that you can guarantee yourself everlasting life? I mean, quite frankly, you and I can't even keep ourselves alive. I don't know how we could in any way earn eternal life by virtue of anything that we do. It is a good reminder, as we come to this passage and we need to be aware of a couple of things when we begin to think in terms of, “I'm a really good person and somehow, I'm going to get to heaven.” I'd say one of the first things that you need to consider is, be aware of the One you need to stand before. Once again, you and I aren't standing before man, in which maybe we can do a slight of hand and somehow trick him into believing that we really are good people. It's not like we can put on some sort of garb and people go, “Wow, he's a really holy person because he wears really holy robes.” Because we're going to stand before God, who, according to Scripture searches the intent and the heart of man. I mean, He knows the way we think. There's a reminder, according to Psalms 81:15, that a person who fakes it will incur a stricter judgment before God. So, if you want to go the whole, “I'm going to put on a show and somehow, it's going to impress everybody else,” there's a stricter judgment for that because God doesn't like pretenders. God's looking for the genuine of heart. Now, the genuine of heart will stand before God and go, “You know what? You're righteous. I'm not.” That's an obvious thing.

The way that it's put in Psalm 7:9 is,

“... the righteous God tries the hearts and minds.”

He's the One you'll stand before. Once again, if you don't think His standards are high, just ask Job, the most righteous man that walked the face of the earth, he'll tell you.

Galatians will tell you in Galatians 6:7, “Don't be deceived, God is not mocked.” He knows the difference between somebody that's just jumping through hoops, and somebody that actually wants to do the right thing. “Whatever a man sows that shall he also reap. If you sow according to the flesh, of the flesh you'll reap corruption; sow according to the Spirit, of the Spirit, life.” God can see your heart. Don't think He's deceived. Don't think you can trick Him. He's the One that you're going to stand before, and also understand that your position is based on what you know. I mean, if in fact you're going to go by the whole judgment thing, then you're going to be

held accountable. I know people go, "I don't know what God would hold me accountable for." I'm going to tell you what He's doing, He says it in Romans 2. If in fact you're a heathen, you've never heard the gospel, you never heard the word of God, you never heard anything, God's going to hold you accountable to the laws of nature, and He's going to hold you accountable to the conscience. You know that thing that tells you that you shouldn't be doing certain things? I oftentimes hear people say, "Well, I don't know all this stuff about the Bible." Ok, well, He's not going to hold you accountable to that, but what do you know? He will hold you accountable to that. Are you sure you want to go into the Law? To the Jews, according to Romans 2, He's going to hold them accountable to the Law of Moses. They have the law of Moses, He says that "You're going to be held accountable to that." To the believer, Romans 2, as it ends, God will judge every believer according to the Gospel of Jesus Christ. You know what the Gospel of Jesus Christ is? "Jesus paid it all. I put all of my hope and trust in Him." And Scripture says that He becomes our righteousness. As He states within this particular chapter that it was imputed unto Abraham as righteousness. The point of the matter is that God has always seen it that way. It's never about been about your performance. Your performance was never meant to get you into heaven. Now, it goes all the way back to Abraham, who was before the Law. It was never that. It was, "If you'll put your trust in Me and believe that I'm the good One, and do what you do because you love Me, I'll accept you, and I'll take care of all your sins." And did He? Well, He gave us His word, and His word became flesh and died on the cross. God does love us that much.

I feel like it's important for me to make a differentiation here. I believe that the thought is that we're all going to be judged in some way, and I would say that would be true to a point. As believers, as we put all of our hope in God, according to the Book of Hebrews, it says that when Christ comes, to those who are believing, He comes without reference to sin. That is to say, Romans 8:1 says, there's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus. You put your faith in Him. You said, "I can't do it." You said, "Dad, you put the blocks up. That's the only way they're going up there." You admit the truth, and when you do, God covers those things. They're forgiven. It's interesting that this this whole letter is written to believers, and he's basically saying, "You began in faith, and that's how you're saved, but now you're walking in this world and trying to do things yourself and trying to impress other people." He says, "Stop." The fact of the matter is, it's very easy for us as believers to start falling back into those old patterns. God says, "Because you're My child, I'm not going to let you continue to do that."

There's a passage I want you to turn to. It's found in 1 Peter 4:12.

"Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal among you, which comes upon you for your testing, as though some strange thing were happening to you;

(1 Peter 4:13) but to the degree that you share the sufferings of Christ, keep on rejoicing, so that also at the revelation of His glory you may rejoice with exultation.

(1 Peter 4:14) If you are reviled for the name of Christ, you are blessed, because the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.

(1 Peter 4:15) Make sure that none of you suffers as a murderer, or thief, or evildoer, or a troublesome meddler.”

Ok, you're a believer, your sins have been forgiven. I got it, but don't pursue these things. You say, "Why? What's going to happen? Christ died for me." You maybe haven't read verse 17,

“For it is time for judgment to begin with the household of God...”

Like we used to tell our kids, "Others may get away with this. You will not." "Why?" "Because you're my kid. I'm not going to let you get away with it, because I care." And the same thing is true; we're God's children. We've come into the family of God, the household of God. We're His children. Who the Lord loves, He disciplines, and He scourges every child. Isn't that what it says in Hebrews 12? "If you're without discipline, you're illegitimate. You're not My children." But if you have that discipline, because who the Lord loves, He disciplines, right? Why is it that oftentimes Christians will suffer a greater problem or issue because they've done something, and it seems like the bad guy always gets away? His judgment is to come. Yours is discipline today. Now, the wonderful thing is God not given us what we deserve, but He's disciplining us. He loves us and He's doing this so that He might convey that love to us. The point of the matter is that the Spirit of God and the love of God begins to motivate us and move us to do the right thing. If we fall away, if we slip away, God here on this earth will discipline us in a way to protect us, to keep us, to care for us, to not let us do the things that are hurtful and harmful to other people as believers. The wonderful thing is that we've been saved.

I like the passage in 1 John 4:18, "perfect love casts out fear." Because with perfect love, there is no fear of punishment, and as believers, we're no longer operating under the realm of, "I'm going to get what I deserve." There's therefore now no condemnation in Christ. God will discipline us if we do wrong, but it's not getting us what we deserve. It's God actually caring for us and His faithful wounds are actually bringing us to do the right thing. It's because He does care for us. How wonderful it is to know that we are motivated by the love of God, and it was the love of God that called us, because we actually witnessed it.

When you look at Galatians 3:1, how does he open up?

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”

What is he talking about? He's not talking about the fact that the Galatians were there at the crucifixion of Christ. What he's talking about is when you heard the message, in your eyes, you saw that message. I would say every believer that received Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior, when they heard the message of Christ dying on the cross for their sins, has a picture of Christ being crucified for them, and it is the motivating factor. In fact, the word that he uses within the text is in verse 4, "*paschō*," "you suffer so many things," he's talking about your passion, your intense feelings for what Christ has done for you. Did you have those in vain? That moment that you realized that Christ did this for you. This is the impetus. This is the motivation that moves us to do the things that we do.

There's a passage that I'd like us to look at in closing, if you look with me in James 2. It talks about there's no partiality with God. Obviously, God sees our hearts and He doesn't want us making distinctions. He talks in this particular passage about the royal law, which is the fair law. "You should love your neighbor as yourself." That's kind of quid pro quo, "whatever is good for you is good for me" type thing.

It then goes on and says,

(James 2:10) "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all."

That's what we were talking about, the problem of the Law.

(James 2:11) "For He who said, "DO NOT COMMIT ADULTERY," also said, "DO NOT COMMIT MURDER." Now if you do not commit adultery, but do commit murder, you have become a transgressor of the law.

(James 2:12) So speak and so act as those who are to be judged by the law of liberty.

(James 2:13) For judgment will be merciless to one who has shown no mercy; mercy triumphs over judgment."

He uses a phrase that begins to talk about this law of liberty, and you have to ask yourself, "Well, what is the law of liberty?" And the law of liberty is really defined in James 1, in which he begins to state that this is the law that gives you freedom. The whole perception of liberty is that you're doing what you want to do. Listen, when you realize that God has been merciful to you, when you realize that He loves you, when you realize He wants to give you everything, not one good thing will He withhold," there is a sense of, "I want to serve Him. I want to follow Him. I want to do the things that He says." This is the only thing that will keep you on the right track and this is going to be the fundamental point and the fundamental argument of Paul in Galatians.

In fact, his statement will be, in Galatians 5, "It was for freedom that Christ came to set you free." Set you free from what? From the Law; set you free from what man thinks. You and I are no longer jumping through hoops. We're no longer trying to impress people. Think about how wonderful that is. I don't have to impress you; you don't have to impress me. We all come before God and we all admit that we're sinners, "It's only You that saves." Think how freeing that is, and now we all just want to do what He wants us to. If we're working together and you know you can do it better, then great, you do it better because I'm not trying to impress anybody and you're not. We're just happy that things are getting done for the sake of Christ. We all begin to work together in harmony, not competing, but complementing each other. What a different way to walk when you think about it.

Mothers oftentimes tell their children, "You better behave, or I'm going to call your dad." In a way, that's the job of the church. You see, what the church does, is it begins to tell you, "Ok, you need to straighten up here. The word of God says this. You need to straighten up here." And you can just hear the mother telling the kid, "You better straighten up." Because who the Lord loves, He's going to discipline. The father's going to discipline. He's going to do something about it, but the church kind of rides in here going, "But let's not call Him. Let's not deal with the discipline at the moment. Let's just get this thing fixed now." So, the church encourages believers to do the right thing today. Clearly, as mothers, you want to encourage your children to do the right thing. What is the best thing that you could ever do? Of course, it's point them to trust in only God. Don't let your kids begin to think performance oriented. Don't let them go down that. It's a lonely trail; it causes all kinds of anger, division, hostility, and anxiety. Turn them to Christ. Tell them that they're valuable because of what they were paid for. You are bought by the precious blood of Jesus Christ. That's how valuable you are. Tell your kids that, and tell them, "And isn't it wonderful that we don't have to work our way into heaven? But that makes me want to serve God. How about you?" And we begin to share that wonderful message Paul is making it clear you don't want to go the Law thing; you want to go the faith thing. Law is all you; faith is all God. I'm going to go with that one.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today, and we put all of our trust in You. We're not worthy of Your favor. We're not worthy of Your grace. We're not worthy of the mercy that You showed us. For all have sinned and we fall short of Your glory. Why in the world would we ever think that we could ever be good enough to impress You? Why would we ever be concerned about impressing man, with whom there is no power of salvation? We come to You today and we

embrace this gospel message. You tell us it's the power of God. It is the realization of truth. We come to the realization, and it meant that we're not good enough. We admit that You are wonderful and gracious and kind and holy, and we accept Your graciousness. As you've been telling us all along, "Just trust Me."

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, I'm asking you to just trust God alone. You say, "Well, I don't know. That doesn't prove that I'm better than anybody else." Exactly. It proves that you need a Savior, and it proves that you are loved by One who can save you, and there is a hope, and there is a confidence and there's assurance that will never leave you. There is something else that happens, His Spirit comes within you and there is a spirit of gratitude that won't let you not do the right thing. There is this sense of "He's done all of this for me. Why could I not do this for Him?" And you now begin to be motivated by love. It's the one thing that oftentimes motivates us as children to do what our mother tells us to do, because we know she loves us, and we want to show our love back.