

5.19.2024

Galatians

Chapter 3 - No Understanding with Man

The Obvious Need for Christ (vs. 13-14)

Galatians 3:13-14: Christ 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” — in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

Galatians, what a great book that is. Gospel, not of man, but of God. Our gospel literally takes man out of the picture. We're the recipients of the good, but it's all God. It's not of works, it's not anything you do, not anything I do, but it's us trusting in God's goodness. It's all of faith. That's why it's not religion. It's a relationship. Man keeps trying to put it back into the religion cycle, but it's not. As we understand what the gospel is, then we can live in freedom, but we begin to live in bondage when we begin to realize and begin to go into the realm of what man thinks and man's religion. He heaps all kinds of oppression, all kinds of burdens on us. In fact, that was one of the great concerns that Jesus had for the people when He comes into Jerusalem; especially with the religious leaders, the Pharisees and scribes and Sadducees, is that they were putting heavy burdens on people, but they were not willing with one finger to lift them up. That's actually what He says there in Matthew 23. Our faith is the faith of the gospel. What does “gospel” mean? Well, by its very root of the definition, it is a compound word in the Greek, “*eu*,” referring to that which is good. So, obviously it's a message that is good; it's a message that is benevolent, but it is also a message that is virtuous; good in that sense. So, we have this good message, the last part, “*angelizō*,” (where we get the word evangelism, by the way) is where we get the word “angel.” “*Angelizō*” is basically message or messenger. So, we have a good message. What is the good message? Well, the good message is that it's all God. It's all His goodness, and it's His love for us that saves us. It's not anything that we do. So, that's the wonderful thing about our message.

When you go through the various gospels, you have these different pictures of the goodness of God, and they begin to be revealed in different ways. For instance, you go into the book of Matthew, the gospel according to Matthew, and you see the goodness of God to actually lift up

standards that are far higher than man could ever perceive. Our perception is if you just don't go around killing people, and if in fact you don't go around stealing that, maybe that's ok. Jesus says, "No, if you're thinking it in your heart, is a bad thing." So, we begin to see in the Gospel of Matthew, the kingdom of God and the standards of God, and we go, "Thank you, God, that You're not compromising on these things; that You have standards that are far higher, far more honorable than a man could ever in any way conjure up in his mind."

You come to the Gospel of Mark, and you begin to realize that we have a good news, which is that God elevates servanthood. The whole Gospel of Mark is really about the servitude of Christ and how He came to serve. He didn't come to be served, but He came to serve, and what a wonderful thing to understand. The God of the universe actually loves us that much, that God in the flesh, as John will show us in John 13, will actually wash the feet of the disciples. The Scripture tells us according to Gospel of Mark, that people were flooding into His house to such a degree that His own family thought He was going crazy. "Why are you not turning these people away?" And His fundamental point is, "I came here to serve." And what a wonderful gospel that is. The gospel is telling us that God is not coming to take things away from us, He's coming to give things to us. Certainly not like the world, because the world is wanting to exploit us and use us and manipulate us.

You come to the wonderful Gospel of Luke, and you begin to realize that God has an honorable status, and that honorable walk is the walk of humility. Once again, the world will put you against each other, will put you in competition, and will cause you to think that this is all a competitive thing, but the gospel is, the greatest in the kingdom will be the servant of them all, and the one who humbles himself. So, you have all these wonderful pictures of humility in the Gospel of Luke, and how Christ begins to save the humble.

When you come to the Gospel of John, you realize the greatest of the messages is that the God of the universe, the Creator of all things, wants to have a relationship with you. Can you imagine? For God so loved you that He wants to have this relationship. So, we begin to see Christ in not as much dealing with the multitudes in the Gospel of John but dealing with individuals. We see Him coming ultimately to Peter at the very end, even though Peter had failed Him so miserably. He comes to Peter, and He says, "Peter, do you love Me?" Because the realization is, if in fact you love Him, then you'll believe Him, and you have that wonderful message in the Gospel of John. God, Creator of all things, wants to have a relationship with you.

So, as we go to the various gospels, we have good news; the good news of God's standards, we have the good news of the servitude, of honorable behavior, which is humility, and we have the wonderful good news of God wanting to have a relationship with you. "For God so loved the world that He gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him will not perish but have ever lasting life." He has come to give to you. It's all God. The way that our faith gets

messed up as man puts his finger in it and begins to say, "I have something to do with it." Once he begins to do that, then the gospel gets skewed.

If you look at the beginning, as we've been going through the book of Galatians. In Galatians 1, Paul was very concerned that they were leaving the fundamentals of the gospel. That is to say, "All God, none of man," and going into the realm of "Some of man, some of God." Of course, that's not the message at all.

(Galatians 1:6) "I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel;

(Galatians 1:7) which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

(Galatians 1:8) But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed!

(Galatians 1:9) As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!"

Now the question is, why would somebody preach another gospel? The answer is, because man is proud and he's arrogant. I mean, the one thing that man doesn't like about the gospel of Jesus is that he has to humble himself and admit that he's the Sinner. In other words, he's the bad guy. God's the good guy; man's the bad guy, and man doesn't like admitting that. He perceives himself as somebody that can attain a sense of righteousness, and man is extremely competitive, but even beyond the competitive nature of man, man wants to please man. He lives his life to, in some way, wow those around him and his perception is, "If I can elevate myself to this degree and be accepted." Of course, as Matthew 23 says, that the Pharisees did all their work to be noticed by men. Matthew 6 reiterates that as well, that everything that they did was that man would take note of them. The fact of the matter is that we're very concerned about what other people are thinking. Once you begin to think in that path, it's very difficult for you to listen to anything that the word of God has to say, because that by itself just shuts out everything God is saying. You're not listening to God. You're going, "I wonder what everybody else is thinking. Do you think they like what I wore today?" You're very concerned and focused upon that. You might even share a testimony, and somebody gives you a flinch or something and you go, "Well, I think I offended them. Maybe I shouldn't have put it that way." Well, was that the Spirit of God that led you to put it that way? See, this is a wonderful freedom that we have in Christ.

If you look in Galatians 1:10, which is one of my life verses, you have to ask yourself, who are you pleasing? Who are you striving to please? This is one of Paul's concerns, that the Church of

Galatia was trying to please everybody else, and because of that they were compromising the integrity of the gospel. It's all God's love, it's none of ours. It's not us meeting expectations; it's not us competing with one another, and it's not us in any way trying to get the favor of men.

(Galatians 1:10) “For am I now seeking the favor of men, or of God? Or am I striving to please men? If I were still trying to please men, I would not be a bond-servant of Christ.”

It just boils down to that simplicity, “Who am I trying to please, God or man?”

Chapter 2 goes into a particular incident in which people were worried about Judaism, and they were falling into that path. It may be Judaism to them, to us it may be wokeness or whatever, but we want to fit into whatever people are thinking and we're very concerned about the fact that they may not like what we're doing. We oftentimes base our faith on how people react which is a very sad thing. One of the statements that is made within the passage is, “Look, it makes no difference to me.”

(Galatians 2:6) “But from those who were of high reputation (what they were makes no difference to me; God shows no partiality) ...”

His point is, who's the judge? Who am I trying to please? God sees your heart, and God sees that you accept by faith His marvelous gift, but if in fact you're going to mix this with, “I've got to please men. I've got to somehow get affirmed by man;” you're going to find yourself always competing, always in anxiety and ultimately in bondage of what everybody else thinks.

Galatians 5 is very clear the very beginning, Christ came to set you free from that. So, the fundamental point of the book of Galatians is that Christ has come to set you free. What is the impetus? What is the thing that moves us to believe this?

Paul hits it real hard in Galatians 3:1 as he starts off with, “You foolish Galatians.” Now, his point is that the Galatians had blocked out the obvious. The truth of the gospel is not ambiguous. The truth of the gospel is very clear. The gospel is, “God loved you. He saved you. You are a sinner, confess your sins. He'll accept you.” It's just simply asking you to believe the truth. There's nothing hard about that, very clear, very concise, the gospel. Man has a hard time believing it because he's looking around and going, “Yeah, but what will they think? What would everybody else think? You don't know my family.” So, he has a hard time falling into the truth because he's considering everybody else's opinion. Let me just say this, as many as are people around us, there are that many opinions, and you become enslaved to a lot of enslavement. As you come to this passage, he begins to, if I can put it this way, use axioms, aphorisms, throughout the passage; obvious evidential certitudes within the text that begin to reveal the simplicity of something that's undebatable, irrefutable and undeniable. He says, “Look, this is obvious.” His point is, if you look with me in Chapter 3:1,

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you...”

Somebody had to literally put a spell on them to get them to believe what is false.

Here again, it reminds me of Romans 1, right? That you actually have to suppress the truth in order to believe a lie. You have to work hard. So, Romans 1 says, “Look, the wrath of God is against you because what you've done is you've suppressed the truth in unrighteousness. It's like somebody saying, “Well, I want to rob a bank.” So, you say, “But you know robbing the bank is wrong?” “Well, not really.” Well, why do they say, “Not really”? Because they want to rob a bank. His point is, that you suppress the truth in unrighteousness, but if you really want to know the truth, it's obvious; that's the obvious thing.

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

Now, once again, his point in that particular phrase is not as much that they were present during the crucifixion, but that when they receive Christ, they literally pictured Christ being crucified for them. Actually, I truly believe that when all of us are saved, at the moment that we're saved, there is a sense of “He died on that cross for me.” It becomes a picture that's hard to get out of your head because you actually see His love that has been poured out for you. We accept that gift. We realize at that moment, “It was my sin that nailed Him to that cross. It was His love that stayed there.” And we can't forget that. He says, “What happened? Did you forget this? Did you let everybody else come into your life and begin to tell you other things. That really, it's about your goodness and because you've worked really hard?”

I was going through some stuff that I had when my folks came in to live with me. They brought a lot of old memorabilia, I guess we can put it that way, 11 tubs. Anyway, we have a lot of them, but I found a place for them in the garage. So, relax. I don't know when I'm going to go through them, but I was going through this one, and I don't know if you all know this or not, but I actually graduated from the nursery. In 1955 I graduated from the nursery, and I'm kind of proud of that, but I didn't actually know there was a graduation. I don't even remember the graduation. I don't remember getting the thing, but anyway, I graduated. You begin to realize that we hand out rewards and awards for all kinds of things. I think sometimes our perception is that if in fact we do something that's recognized, then obviously it's a good thing. If in fact it's not recognized by people, then maybe we didn't do anything worthwhile for God. Really, nothing could be further from the truth. Not only some of the things that we do, we do externally and not from the heart, but oftentimes the things that we do that man recognizes aren't necessarily the grand and wonderful things that God recognizes. We seek to please God. The foot of man gets in that door, and he begins to say, “Yeah, but it's got to be some of you.” And we keep coming back going, “None of us, none of us.”

As we come to this passage, he begins to use those obvious things, and one of the things that he states, and just to kind of go by way of review is that, "Look, can't you see that it's obvious that none of us can save ourselves?" One of the statements that he makes if you back up into Galatians 2:16,

"Nevertheless knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in Christ Jesus..."

That's an obvious.

In fact, one of the statements that he makes here, if you look in Galatians 3:11,

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

That's an obvious. He lists all these interesting obvious' because no matter how hard we try, we couldn't be good enough to be saved; to be justified. "Justified" is another word that basically says you're innocent of any malfeasance. You're innocent of any wrongdoing. You are innocent. Can anybody say that they're innocent? I mean, there is nobody, as Scripture says, that doesn't sin. We do something wrong every day. I know I've defined it several times, but I just feel like I just have to make it clear, because once again, you walk up to somebody and say, "Are you a sinner?" They're going, "No, I'm not a sinner." And that's one of their first responses. I go, "You don't understand the word sin, because the word sin has nothing to do with you doing something wrong, it has everything to do with what you don't do right." Sin literally means to miss the mark, and that's why Romans puts it this way, "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." In other words, sin is an archery term which means to miss the bull's-eye. The question you want to ask yourself is, "Did I do anything perfect today?" And if your answer is "No," then you're right on target with everything else that God is saying, because you missed the mark. You need a Savior. Paul will say that no one is justified by the law before God is evident. I mean, that's a self-evident truth. If anybody would just be willing to admit the truth, they would say, "I'm not perfect." They'll say that and then they'll say, but I think I'm going to go to heaven. Ok, it's not going to happen. You fall short of the glory of God. So, he establishes these fundamental truths. Your thought is, "Wow. So, why did God give us the Law?" And we're actually going to be talking about that. If He didn't expect us to work our way through, why did He give the Law? Well, I just want you to note that when the Law was given, it was given way over the time that man had been on the earth. So, we'll talk about why He gave the Law, but it had nothing to do with you being perfect.

In fact, just to kind of give you a side note within the passage, if you look in Galatians 3:19; if you're asking, "Why then the Law?" Paul goes, I know what you're asking, "Why the Law?"

(Galatians 3:19) “Why the Law then? It was added because of transgressions, having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until the seed would come to whom the promise had been made.”

In other words, why did we need a Law? Because you kept sinning. It was bad enough that you kept sinning, but then things got worse. The strange thing about our country is we're always passing new laws. You go, “Where did that law come from?” Because you started doing that. So, the laws start forming when people start doing bad things, because people are trying to contain the sin. They're trying to build fences around the sin, but the Law was never meant to make you righteous. This is obvious. You go, “Well, I don't know if God intended this.” Well, He goes all the way back to Abraham. He goes, “Let's talk about before the Law. Abraham, whom you say is your father, and you say you follow him, he didn't even have the Law. Why do you follow him?” Ah, so this man was made righteous before the Law. That's right. How was he made righteous? Faith. It's always been faith. God has never put Law as the way and the means for salvation. It's never been in the book. Yet man has a hard time, going, “Are you sure?” Why is that? Because man keeps telling him that it's another way. Man keeps putting him against one another and they begin to compete with one another.

There's a passage in John 5 where Jesus states this,

(John 5:39) “You search the Scriptures because you think that in them you have eternal life...”

That's the reason I search the Scriptures.

“... it is these that testify about Me;

(John 5:40) and you are unwilling to come to Me so that you may have life.”

I wonder why?

(1 John 5:44) “How can you believe, when you receive glory from one another and you do not seek the glory that is from the one and only God?”

Why do people misinterpret Scripture? Because man has stuck his finger in it and distorted it to mean something that fits in with his righteousness. If you wanted to do God's will and simply wanted to listen to what He says; so many times, I just open a passage of Scripture, I go, “What do You want to tell me today?” I mean, you don't want to jump into Scripture with preconceived notions and another agenda and say, “I'm going to make it say this.” Because once you start doing that, as Peter says, the unstable and the untaught distort Scripture. When you go into Scripture going, “God, what do You want to tell me?” If you go searching for truth, you'll find it. God will give it to you. If you ask, if you seek, if you knock, God will give it to you.

Let any of you ask for wisdom, God gives generously, without reproach. He wants to give it to you.

So, when we come to this, we begin to realize that they've been bewitched because they're so concerned about what man is thinking and everything's been skewed. God's intent has always been obvious. God's message has always been clear. He adds another point within Galatians 3. He goes, "By the way, here's a warning, if in fact you want to go the Law route, it's not going to go well for you. If you break one infraction, just one, it's not going to go well for you." Once again, I mean, you could be a model citizen all your life, and you go out and kill somebody tomorrow and it just all goes down the drain. Because now you're a murderer, and now you're incarcerated; maybe your life is taken because you did one thing. I mean, you can go before the judge, and you go, "This is the first time I murdered somebody, first time." And see if it'll work, but I don't think it will. The point is that the Law is unmerciful. The law is unyielding. If you want to go, "I think I can do this good person thing." Then ok, you're going to be judged by the Law. You're not going to be able to throw yourself on the mercy of the court, but you're going to actually place yourself under the letter of the Law. Paul is saying, "Good luck with that." Because cursed is everybody who falls under that.

(Galatians 3:10) "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.'"

(Galatians 3:11) Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, "THE RIGHTEOUS MAN SHALL LIVE BY FAITH."

(Galatians 3:12) However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, "HE WHO PRACTICES THEM SHALL LIVE BY THEM.""

Can you imagine yourself standing before God and going, "I think 50% of my life was pretty good." I mean, could you picture yourself standing before any judge, and thinking that will get you out of whatever you did wrong on that particular day? The point, once again, is you don't want to go that way. Paul would say in this particular setting, "That's obvious." He now introduces us to something I think miraculous in that he uses what I would perceive to be an obscure, cryptic-like passage that is drawn from the Old Testament. Well, it's one of the things we're talking about in the first service. If you want to do some digging, you'll find some treasures. You get into these passages, and you go why has He mentioned this? He pulls the passage out of Deuteronomy, literally, seemingly out of the blue, and you're going, "I'm not even sure how that fits." But He interjects it, and it does fit.

(Galatians 3:13) “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law...”

Of course, his point has always been “It's all Him.”

“... having become a curse for us—for it is written, “CURSED IS EVERYONE WHO HANGS ON A TREE””

I don't even know where that came from. Why did he pull that in? In fact, I've gone through a lot of passages, and to the best of my knowledge, the only place that curse is mentioned, is in Deuteronomy 21. “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.” Why is Paul introducing this particular verse at this particular time, in this setting?

Go with me to Deuteronomy 21, and we'll actually see the text in which he uses. In this wonderful passage, I want to make some things clear as far as the context, because it's always important not to just extrapolate a particular verse in a particular context. The whole chapter is really dealing with doing what is right and certain sins that really are bringing judgment upon yourself. Verse 18 is going to set the stage for what he's going to be talking about, and the stage is really dealing with a sense of rebelliousness and hostility towards authority. Of course, we've never seen any of that. So, I'm thankful for that.

(Deuteronomy 21:18) “If any man has a stubborn and rebellious son...”

Yeah, you would think the next phrase should be, “Join the club.” It's not the next phrase. It goes on and it takes it to the fact that he does not obey his father or his mother when they chastise, he will not listen to him. He's just impossible. He's not going to listen.

(Deuteronomy 21:19) “Then his father and mother shall seize him...”

By the way, I'm just going to tell you ahead of time that this a nation whose law was the law of God. So, this was all done under the nation; under the government. You can't take your son and drag him out and stone them to death. I hope you don't feel like it, but the point is that this was a governmental law under the Divine. Once again, you want to go by the Law? “Well, I think I'd go by the Law.” Good, good. We'll pick up some stones and see how you like it.

“... will not obey his father or his mother, and when they chastise him, he will not even listen to them,

(Deuteronomy 21:19) then his father and mother shall seize him, and bring him out to the elders of his city at the gateway of his hometown.

(Deuteronomy 21:20) “They shall say to the elders of his city, ‘This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious, he will not obey us, he is a glutton and a drunkard.’

(Deuteronomy 21:21) “Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear of it and fear.””

The point of the passage is that what made the crime so heinous was the dishonoring of his parents. Now once again, I think our perception is, “Well, that's not a big deal.” God goes, “That's a really big deal.” Because it's the dishonoring that causes all the other problems. It's fundamental to all the problems. A person that is rebellious and incorrigible will not listen. I mean, why do people kill other people? Why do people rob banks? They have no sense of respect for honor, for what is right, for authority; anything like that. It's a big deal. However, I understand we don't get it. To put it in the context, this is the Law. How do you take care of a rebellious kid, really? I mean, it can get to the point they're not listening anymore to you. “Ok, I think we'll go by the Law.” Ok, this is what the Law says, “Take them out and stone them.” Because that's the only way you're going to fix the problem according to the Law. See, incarceration is the only way you're going to fix the problem according to the Law. It then goes on to segue into something more intense, but the point is that a heinous crime has been committed.

“Then all the men of his city shall stone him to death; so you shall remove the evil from your midst, and all Israel will hear of it and fear.”

(Deuteronomy 21:22) “If a man has committed a sin worthy of death and he is put to death, and you hang him on a tree...”

This is the only passage this is actually recorded. Paul Records it in Galatians. “Hang them on a tree.” It's pretty interesting.

Now, there's a passage in Numbers 25. We won't turn to it because we won't have time. If you go to Numbers 25:4, one of the things that God says because the leaders had rebelled is, “Take them up. I want you to hang them in plain sight and I want them to be a public display.” So, the picture is that their rebellion against God had to be dealt with in a public way.

(Deuteronomy 21:23) “His corpse shall not hang all night on the tree, but you shall surely bury him on the same day (for he who is hanged is accursed...”

And that's the phrase that is actually used in Galatians.

“...accursed of God), so that you do not defile your land which the LORD your God gives you as an inheritance.”

Now, there are a couple of questions I just want to deal with. The first is, why is it necessary that they be hung on a tree? What is seen within the passage as well as in the Old Testament is that if somebody does something that is horrific and horrendous and heinous, it has to be

revealed to the congregation. It has to be publicly displayed. As Romans 3 says that Christ was hung in a public display for our sins. So, there has to be a public display regarding that. Just to fill you in on this, the point of the text is this is where it all began; it was at the tree. If you remember in the garden, it was the tree of the knowledge of good and evil that man chose. Now, God says, "Don't." But man goes, "No. I think I'd like that." Now, when you think of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the immediate perception is, well, the focus is not just evil, but it's the discernment, the ability to see both sides, what evil does and what good does; to open your eyes to see these things. If I can clarify this for you, what you're really asking for is the Law, because the Law is a discernment between right and wrong. It's the judgment between what is good and what is evil. If in fact you only have good, there is no Law. There's no need for it. However, the discernment of good and evil, well, let's see, there's a lady with a blindfold which weighs and balances, and that sense of justice and what is right. Even when we come into our courts, we have these jurors that come in, and what is their goal? To come up with a verdict; where we get our word "veracity" and "truth." So, the goal is to come up with truths, but you have to weigh all the evidence, and you have to know what is right and what is wrong; what was done good and what was done bad; who is the good and who is the bad. When man went into the garden and he said, "I want to take control of this." He's saying, "I want to put myself under the Law." That's actually what he was saying. Pretty interesting. "This is what I want to know." Because our perception is, "If I know this stuff, I can fix it." You see, the reason why people do wrong is they have no idea it's wrong, right? If you just told him that it was wrong, they would do the right thing. In fact, if you would bring more laws in, people would get better, but it's not true. When man takes good and evil in his hands, the only solution he can have is, "Ok, this isn't working. We're going to have to kill them." That's the only solution you can come up with because the evil isn't stopping. There's no end to this. That's why we have jails and prisons and that's why we have things in the government that take people's lives. We have no solution to the problems, but we wanted it.

The sad thing about it is that the moment we desired it, we dishonored God. We told Him we don't want the relationship that says, "I trust You." We said, "We want on our own to live apart from You. We're buying what the serpent said, and he said that You're trying to shaft us. You're trying to take advantage of us." Now, I don't know how they can come up with that conclusion because He made everything good for them and put them in the garden, the grandest place of all the earth. Somehow, they came up with that conclusion, and it was in that conclusion that they committed the most heinous crime that could ever be committed. It was at that tree that they spat on God and said, "I could care less about You. I just want to be in control." And as the serpent said, "You'll be like God, you'll be in control of everything." That's what man did. God then took that tree, and He says, "This will be the tree of shame." When man commits a heinous crime, such as not caring for those around him, not caring about what his mother

thinks, not caring about what his father thinks, not loving compassionately, honoring the people that he should, this is the most heinous crime that you could commit. It really is the foundation of all horrific crimes. He said, "This will be the reminder. Cursed is everyone who hangs on the tree, because every time you see that tree, it's going to remind you of what happened at the beginning." It was at the tree that Abraham met with God, if you remember, by the oaks of Mamre. It'll be the tree in which our Savior will hang on. It will be that reminder, "I took your most horrific, horrendous things that you did, and I paid the price for them." Paul's wanting them to go back to the tree and he's wanting them to realize once again, just like he did in Galatians 3:1, "before whose eyes He was publicly crucified." Why is he taking us back to the tree? Because that was the place that you abandoned God. Paul's wanting them to make the connection, that embracing the Law and saying, "I can be good enough to do this without Christ" is you crucifying Him again to that tree. It's you coming in again and refusing to honor God and refusing to respect God, and it's you separating yourself from His love, from believing that everything that He does for you is out of love. That law came in effect because of that; because you wanted it.

People say, "Where did the law come from? Why is God so mean?" You're mean. You brought the Law in. You wanted it. Had you left it into God's hand, you'd get nothing but good, but you wanted it. You want to take this into your own hands. We look at the Law and we kept this love hate relationship with the Law because we know that we need it in order to stop people from doing stuff, but that we hate it by virtue of what it does and how it handles things. It's repulsive in both ways, so to speak. What's the solution? Well, Paul is saying there's somebody that actually redeemed us from this. Deuteronomy 21:23 says that the way you have to handle his corpse is it should not hang on the tree all night.

Now, there's a number of passages that deal with this particular issue, but I won't have time to go into all of them. The point of the matter is that it's like Ephesians 4:26 where it says, "BE ANGRY, AND yet DO NOT SIN; do not let the sun go down on your anger." So, there are a number of points that are being dealt with by taking that body down and not allowing that body to hang, as Christ was taken down before the darkness came as it would enter into another day. There is a reason why and let me give you several reasons why.

The first is that in no way must death and punishment be made exalted. In other words, you keep somebody hanging on that cross, the perception is, "Yay, this is the thing that should always be elevated." And God says, "We're not going to elevate death and punishment. What we are going to elevate is resurrection. That's what we are going to elevate, but we're not going to elevate death and punishment."

The second thing that we're not going to do is sin must not be exonerated or in any way elevated or romanticized. Strange thing, I suppose, that if you were able to get one of Bonnie

and Clyde's hubcaps on their car that it would be worth something. Why? Because we've romanticized any part of them. Actually, the way that it was written in the Mishna, that any part of the body, the clothing, even the cross must be completely destroyed so that in no way man would romanticize the evil. That's pretty interesting because man would have a tendency to do that.

The third is that sin must not be remembered. All memory of the sin has to be eradicated. One of the great passages of Scripture that we read is Psalm 103:12, that God doesn't remember our transgression, but as far as the East is from the West, He removes them to remember them no more.

I like the way that's actually put in Micah 7:19, “... You will cast all their sins into the depths of the sea.”

That's a great picture, isn't it? The seas get pretty deep. The point is that you're not going to be able to see them. Christ has not only died for our sins, but He's also removed them from us. This particular incident that came through the Law, man says, “I want the Law.” Christ says, “Ok, I'll come, and I'll fulfill the Law for you.” So, He not only fulfills the Law in the sense that He was perfect and sinned not, but He fulfilled the Law in that He died for all of your sins, thus fulfilling the Law that we embraced and said we have to be in charge of it. He goes, “You're in charge.” And then He let us crucify Him. Now, Paul wants you to know that He did that for you.

Now, I want you to see the end of this Galatians text, because this is his main point in the end. He says this in verse 13,

“Christ 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” —

(Galatians 3:14) in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.”

How is it you received the promise of the Spirit of God? How is it that you know that you're a child of God? You have the Spirit of truth that you have received when you accept the gift that God has given you. Let me tell you what happens; you confess your sins. Look, I've done this experiment. I know it works. I've gone up to individuals and people that I've done wrong to, and I go, “Look, I'm sorry. I shouldn't have done it, and sometimes they're very gracious and they say something like, “It's ok, no big deal.” And other times they go, “Doesn't matter. I don't like you anyway.” But sometimes it works and sometimes it doesn't. The point is, I've never walked away after saying I was sorry, feeling better even if they say, “It's ok.” But I can tell you this, when I confess my sins before God and I received His Son, Jesus Christ, my Lord and Savior, a Spirit came upon me and said, “Not only is it ok, you're My son, and I give you everything.” And

I had this sense of boldness. It's like I'm not only forgiven, I'm inspired. Where did that come from? Paul's point is, how could you receive this Spirit if it was something you did? That's not how you received the Spirit to begin with anyway, was it? That's not what happened. I can tell you, when you and I receive Jesus Christ and His forgiveness, when we come at the foot of the cross and picture what He did for us, our most heinous crimes and sins, and He completely fulfilled the Law for us. There is a forgiveness that comes that is inexplicable. That's his point.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You today and we just ask that You open our eyes; that we'll see the obvious. The obvious, that we are sinners, the obvious that there's no way we could ever be good enough to eradicate the things that we've done wrong; to see the obvious that You've always wanted us just to have a relationship with You. You've not from the beginning ever had Law, but it came into effect because of our rebellious nature. Quite frankly, it was man's solution to these things, and how harsh and how horrible it was. Nevertheless, Your Son came and took the Law and became the guilty one for us. What a marvelous picture in our eyes. What a grievous thought that we caused that. Yet, how is it that I can be so grieved over my own sins and yet so relieved and so joyous when getting off my knees? This has to be Your Spirit. It has to be a gift that declares to us, "I now accept you because you trusted in My goodness and not yours." With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're just asking you to come to that point.