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Galatians

Chapter 3 - No Understanding with Man

Unable to Grasp the Law's Purpose (vs.21-25)

The Law Became our Tutor to Lead us to Christ (vs. 23-25)

Galatians 3:23-25: But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed. Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith. But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

“The Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ.” One of the greatest words of all Scripture. I bet most of you didn't really even know it, but it really explains much of why God did the things that He did. You're reading the Old Testament, and we have the wonderful Law of God. Our perception is that the reason why He gave us the Law was so that we'd be saved through the Law. If we just do everything that the Law says, then we'll be righteous people. In fact, if you were to ask most people, “Are you going to heaven?” They would say something like “I'm a pretty good person.” And what they base it on, is that in their minds they had done what they thought was right. So, the perception fundamentally is that if you do the things according to the rules, if you fundamentally do the things that are right, then obviously you'll be in heaven. This is an erroneous conclusion. The perception that the Law was for the purpose of bringing life to you couldn't be any further from the truth. So, this particular passage really just nails it for us and clarifies for us, because even today we have Christians that are joining groups that are kind of blending Judaism with Christianity, which is just totally erroneous. It's taking us into a realm that is bringing us back into the Law and back into the works, and it was never meant to be. The question is, why? Is the Law bad?

There's a great passage in the Old Testament if you look with me in Isaiah 42. I can just quote the verse for you just to establish that no, the law is good.

(Isaiah 42:21) “The LORD was pleased for His righteousness' sake To make the law great and glorious.”

The Law is a good thing, but it was never meant to be the solution, and it was never meant to be eternal; it was meant to be a temporary solution or a temporary problem. It would not save us, but it would hold back evil. Man takes the Law, and he sees it as probably one of his greatest tools. In fact, it plays on man's pride. He likes the Law in some respects, and of course he hates it in others. Obviously, he likes it when he can use it against somebody else, but when it begins to accuse him, he's not too fond of it. But it is that which man uses to try to solve problems. We kind of bought into this, and I guess fundamentally we're brainwashed into thinking that we're the solution for everything, That's fundamentally humanism. The perception is that man is going to build his utopia. He's going to eradicate war. He's going to eradicate crime, hate, poverty, disease. He will even give you freedom. You know what his solution is? Laws. That's pretty interesting, isn't it? "We're going to give you freedom. Do you know how we're going to do it? We're going to have laws." It sounds counterintuitive, really, when you think about it. The fundamental point is that man perceives that rules and regulations are somehow going to be the answer to the problems that he has. If you have a disease, we're going to make a law to make you have certain, maybe, I don't know, medicine. We're going to make laws to cause you to wear certain things. The thought is that the law is somehow going to be the one thing that will make everything better. If you're a hateful person, we're going to actually make hate crimes something horrific. You think that's going to settle it? The problem is that laws never really do change anything. What they do is, they subdue, and they can hold back, but they can't change the heart. Therefore, they're only a temporary Band-Aid on the problems. Our faith knows all too well that rules and regulations and cronyism and prejudicial things that man does could never really change anything. Our faith is based on the fact that something internally has to happen. This has always been the case, and Paul emphasizes this in particular in the book of Galatians as he brings out Abraham, who was 430 years before the Law. His point is that if Abraham was, according to the Scripture, declared righteous by God 430 years before the Law, then obviously, the Law wasn't the answer because Abraham was declared righteous. Abraham was a friend of God, and the relationship was that which God had intended it to be. However, the Law was necessary because of transgressions increasing.

(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."

Now, one of the things that he's trying to do is make the differentiation between the ability of the Law to change you and the promise of God which will change you. With the Law, you need a mediator. You need somebody to go between, you need somebody to litigate for you, somebody to defend you in some ways, but not with the promise, and that's why he goes on to say, "But God is one." His point is that through the promise, God's the only One that matters because the promise is not based on anything that you do. It's based on His work. So, if you

look at the passage in verse 19, there's no mediator needed anymore. Why? Because your faith is based not on the Law, but it's based on a promise.

That's why it reads this way, "having been ordained through angels by the agency of a mediator, until..."

"Until." That's telling us that change is taking place. What is the change? Well, the change is that something was given to you that was greater than the Law; that was the seed of the promise. As it goes on and says, obviously that you don't need a mediator,

(Galatians 3:20) "Now a mediator is not for one party only; whereas God is only one."

The point is that with the Law, you need two parties. You need somebody in the middle to kind of work with them. But with the promise, God made a promise. He's promised that it had nothing to do with you. It was God's goodness that did it. So, we're banking on that.

Then it goes on and says,

(Galatians 3:21) "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? ..."

In other words, "I guess the Law isn't even good anymore. Really, it's not a good thing." And he says, "On the contrary, the Law is a good thing."

"... May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life..."

And that's the problem. See, people perceive the Law to do the things that it was never meant to do, and this is where the confusion comes in. If you were to ask, "What's the purpose of the 10 Commandments?" "Well, it's to keep me straight and to keep me doing the right thing." It'll never keep you straight. It'll hold you back from doing wrong, especially if they enforce it, but it will never make you straight. It will never keep you right, and it was never meant to do that. It does display the righteousness of God because we easily forget, and we easily go our own way, and we convolute the path. The Law then puts us back on track. There's no doubt about that. But it can't make you better.

That's one of the reasons why in Romans 7, he says, "I want to do the right thing, but I don't do it. Why can't I do this?" And you see that argument in Romans 7. He says, "Who will set me free from this?" The declaration then in Chapter 8 is, "Yeah, but in Christ, there's therefore now no condemnation to those who are in Christ Jesus, and it's really the Spirit of God's forgiveness that changes my heart." With me saying all of these things still, it's a little confusing. So, what he does is he puts it in a particular setting. He puts it in the setting of their humanity.

(Galatians 3:15) "Brethren, I speak in terms of human relations..."

Sometimes we just need things explained from where we are. It would be no different than me just explaining how things work in Jacksonville and describing certain areas. You go, "Ok, now I can relate to that." The same thing is true here.

What we know about Scripture is, and I've often times mentioned this, is that Scripture was not written in a vacuum. It was written in historical context. Scripture was given to us at a particular point in a particular time, so that it might reveal the truth in a divine way so that when you read Scripture, it's not just the words; it's the historical setting and the culture that clarify the meaning to us. So, we know that God's sovereignly orchestrated this New Testament to be written in a particular point in time, and we know that at this particular juncture, the Romans were literally over most of the world at this juncture, and that the Greeks, being before the Romans, had infiltrated to the point of Hellenism. It's another word for Greeks, and had permeated societies. Therefore, Romans were just as much Greeks as they were Romans in many respects, because the culture of the Greeks were there, and the New Testament was written in Greek. So, when pastors delve in the word of God, we look at the Greek words because the wonderful thing is that God had so chosen a language that was far more in depth than our English language, and which show different nuances and points that the English language never could. But God had ordained that. Then, He sends out the gospel at a time in which the Romans had paved roads to such a degree that He says to His disciples, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel." And the Romans had already made roads for them. God had placed all these settings so that we might understand, and so that we might do His will. God is orchestrating these things.

So, as we come to this, Paul begins to explain this particular scenario in human terms that are relatable.

(Galatians 3:21) "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? ..."

In other words, are they at odds with each other? How is it that you could say, "Well, we're not of the Law, we're of grace"? Well, it almost sounds like we're anti-Law, but that's not true. As Christ will say, "Don't think that I came to eradicate the Law, I came to fulfill it." But there is a change, and the question is what is the change? There is a purpose. What was the purpose of the Law?

So, he goes on and says, "Is the Law then contrary to the promises of God? May it never be! For if a law had been given which was able to impart life, then righteousness would indeed have been based on law."

Have you ever known a law where somebody goes, "I'll invent one." If I came up to you and said, "I just thought of a new law: Be good." Now, I could delegate it. I could maybe get it passed in the Senate. I don't know. Maybe not, but anyway, I would get this to be a law. Do you

think it would make our country better? See, there is no law that would change your heart. There has to be a spiritual change.

His point at the very beginning of this chapter is,

(Galatians 3:1) “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”

(Galatians 3:2) This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

Was it a relationship that drew you? Was it the love of God that drew you? Was it the realization that He redeemed you that drew you to God, or was it the whole list of dos and don'ts and regulations and ritualistic things that we do? Was that what drew you to God? You have to come to the conclusion, “Well, it's obvious what drew me to God. It didn't have anything to do with the list of dos and don'ts. It was “God so loved the world.” That's what drew me.” He goes. “Ok, so it was the Spirit that had changed in your heart.” Right. Ok. So, this is the point.

If you look in verse 22,

(Galatians 3:22) “But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin...”

The point is that as we were talking about with the Law, one of the things that the law does is it just reveals how unlawful you are. Once again, the purpose of the Law was not to make us righteous, but rather to prove that we weren't; because man has a tendency to think, “I think I'm pretty good.” So, the Law came in for that purpose and you realize, “Wow, I don't think I have anything to say.” The same thing is actually written in Romans 3. In which, “Why the Law?” The law came that every mouth would be closed, but it also does something else, and the word that he uses here for “shut up” is literally “encloses us;” “hems us in.” We have arguments why we should go to heaven and what the Law does, it goes, “Yeah, but you didn't do this. But you didn't do this. You didn't do this.” Before long, you feel like you're in a court of law, and the law's going, “You're guilty.” And you go, “I guess the evidence is piling up.” So, it's closing in on you. The way that it's put is,

“But the Scripture has shut up everyone under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.”

Now, verse 23 in our text, that we're looking at today,

“But before faith came, we were kept in custody under the law, being shut up to the faith which was later to be revealed.”

(Galatians 3:24) Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith.

(Galatians 3:25) But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

The keyword in the text is the word “tutor.” It can be translated a number of different ways. It is important that we understand the word in the context that it was meant. Once again, it was a word that was given to us in a historical setting and to understand the historical setting, is to give us the understanding of what He meant by this. As we come to this, it's important to realize that when he parallels “tutor,” he parallels it with the Law. So, we're actually going to see now exactly why the Law was given and what it was supposed to do. So, to describe to you, he uses the word “*paidagōgos*.” Now, it's actually where we get the word “pedagogical” in the English, which is another word for teaching and training. If you look it up in your dictionary, it'll make reference to not just teaching, but the way that you train. So, I often wondered when I was going to school as a kid, who invented this stuff? The Greeks. That's part of the problem. Anyway, you have the school, and you have this sense of training, and “pedagogical” really makes reference to the way that you train a kid as they're growing up. It means that you're going to have to keep discipline in the classroom. See, this really bothers kids, but you're going to have to keep discipline in the classroom and you're going to have to make sure that they're not going over here. They begin to run over here, “Come back here.” You've got to keep them in reigns, so to speak. That's pedagogical. It's not as much the emphasis of the teaching as it is the guarding that's in effect now.

Now, I thought I'd bring in a little history to you to help you understand this better. One of the best places to go, of course, at this particular time, Plato being about 300 years before Christ, and Socrates, being about another 100 years before Plato or somewhere in that neighborhood; so, we're going to go back to them. We're also going to go into Libanius, who lived about 300 years after Christ. What's interesting is, “*paidagōgos*,” the word that is used here in the text was so well known for I would say well over 1000 years. So, for Paul to use this word, it was well known throughout the community. Everybody knew what he was talking about and quite frankly, the pedagogical way of teaching is something that even is a part of our teaching today. So, for him to use the word, they just knew immediately what he was talking about. Now, his point is that a “*paidagōgos*” is the Law. So, what is a “*paidagōgos*”? Well, Plato states that the pedagogue was to actually, and I'll quote him, “was to guide the boy away from his childish ignorance. At times, treating him as a freeborn and at other times as a slave.” The interesting thing about humanity is that we think that we're the answer. This kind of goes way back, but I remember watching Superman on the TV. I mean, the original Superman, black and white. Anyway, I remember watching, “You're faster than a speeding bullet. Stronger than a locomotive and you can leap tall buildings in a single bound.” And I remember thinking, “That's

me. I can do that." I've admitted this several times, but I actually had some problems jumping off the garage, but be that as it may, it didn't work; even with the cape, it still didn't work. But that is childish ignorance.

What Paul is going to convey is that it's childish ignorance for you to think that you are going to change things. What the Law does in our minds, is we use it to control, and we perceive that we have a tool by which "We're going to leap tall buildings, and we're going to save humanity. We're going to create a utopia." And you know what that is? That's childish thinking. It's the pride of man that that brings him to this point. Plato states, "A pedagogue was to guide the boy away from his childishness ignorance. At times, he was going to treat him as freeborn at other times as slave." Now, what's interesting about this role of pedagogue is that he was actually hired by the father, and he was a slave himself. So, the bizarre thing obviously, was that you had a slave that was in control of the boy that was a free person.

The way that it goes on, and it says, "The role was such that a pedagogue would be in constant companion to the child. The pedagogue escorted the child to and from school. He would carry the books or other objects, sometimes securing an education for himself in the process as he was a servant. He took the child to athletic practice, oversaw his meals; made him do his homework. I bet you guys are wanting to hire him right now. He would protect the child from harm. He would supervise his social engagements. 24 hours a day, the pedagogue accompanied the child in virtually every activity of life.

It goes on and says this, as now we're dealing with 300 years after Christ, but still the same culture was in existence. Libanius quotes, "For pedagogues are guards of the blossoming youth, they are keepers. They are a fortified wall. They drive out the undesirable lovers, thrusting them away, keeping them out, not allowing them to fraternize with the boys. Libanius praised the pedagogue as a protective wall and as a prison stronger than any secret chamber. A pedagogue was comparable to a shepherd over sheep or to a pilot over a ship. More importantly, the pedagogue was the moral guide and was to be obeyed, so the pedagogue was supposed to assist in the first pace toward virtue. The pedagogue was responsible for every aspect of the child's upbringing, from correcting grammar and diction to controlling his or her sexual morals. Reciting pedagogues advice, Syneca says, "Walk thus, and so; eat thus, and so. This is the proper conduct for a man and that for a woman. This for a married man and that for a bachelor." Some pedagogues were humane in their supervisory roles. Others were overly brutal, and the punishment was brutal and abusive.

Plato describes his child pedagogue relationship like the taming of a wild creature. The point of the passage clearly is that the purpose of this one was to somehow build walls around for protection; to keep the child from going off into his childish exploits doing things that he shouldn't do. But he was never meant to have a relationship with the child in the sense of like

the father. He was hired by the father to make sure the child was going to walk straight, do the right thing, so to speak.

Plato recalls an interesting conversation between Socrates, as Socrates had written this down and had this dialogue with this young boy that was being overseen by a pedagogue. So, he begins to question and ask, "How do you feel about this relationship?" It would be like you and I sitting down with some kid going to school, and asking, "So, what do you think of school?" And the kid going, "I don't like it." Anyway, so the conversation goes this way, actually recorded. It's interesting. So, he goes to the boy, Lysis is his name, and Socrates asked, "So, someone controls you?" That's a loaded question to a kid. Lysis replied, "Yes. He is my pedagogues." "Is he a slave?" Socrates asks. "Why certainly, he belongs to us," responded Lysis. To which Socrates mused, "What a strange thing, a free person controlled by a slave." That is interesting, isn't it? Socrates and Lysis continue in this discussion and dialogue. Socrates asks, "What reason can they have for this so strangely preventing you from being happy and doing the things that you like? Why do they maintain you all day long in constant servitude to somebody, so that in a word, you do hardly a single thing that you desire?" Lysis replied quite succinctly, "It is because I am not of age yet."

This is the point. The point is that the Law is given as that which keeps us from doing the wrong thing, until something happens. Now the question is, what is that thing that needs to happen? What he will go on to explain is that there has to be this spirit of manhood that comes in. A child would have this one watching over him as long as he was a child, but when he becomes a man, he no longer has need of him. It reminds me of 1 Corinthians 13, "When I was a child, I used to think as a child, act as a child, but when I became a man, I put away childish things." Now, that's in the context in 1 Corinthians 13 as the description of what love is. "Love does not seek its own. It's not proud. It's not arrogant." Well, all those attributes are really childishness. Boastful arrogance, thinking only of himself, that's childishness. "But when I became a man, I put away those childish things." What happened? I grew up. What Scripture is going to reveal to us is that the Law has a purpose in the sense of those that are lawless, but the Law is not needed for the lawful, or more specifically, those who have a heart to do the right thing; a sense of a spirit of lawfulness in them; a decision to do the right thing at the right time. This is a very important point, that the law was never meant to go on in the child's life in the sense of having a pedagogue following him all during the life. I mean, you're like 25 years old and the guy is still telling you what to do? You don't need that anymore. He's telling you when to eat, when not to eat. You don't want that anymore. If in fact this is still happening, you've reverted back to childishness. This is one of the reasons why, when people bring the Law into their faith again, you're going, "Why are you doing that?" You're bringing in the very thing that was meant to bring you to Christ. If in fact you've grown up and you have the Spirit of Christ in you, you're no longer thinking in the Law. You're thinking in the Spirit of Christ. There's been a

transformation in the way that you see things, and to revert back to the Law, you become a child again in your training. Somebody's telling you, "You have to do something, you don't have to do something," and the rules and regulations, the regiment, well, it was never meant to follow you all the days of your life. The way that he describes this in the passage is, "Therefore the law has become a tutor to lead us to Christ." The whole reason for the training was to help keep you in these boundaries. When I think about Israel, it was to keep Israel from fraternizing with the other parts of the world. "Don't be with them." Oh, well, the Law was to save us." No, the Law would never save you. It would put up fences and walls and keep you from hurting yourself and destroying yourself, but what you're looking for is the seed; more specifically, the seed of the Spirit of Christ to come within you. Once that has happened, there's a transformation and you don't need the Law anymore.

The way that it's read is, "Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, so that we may be justified by faith."

Isn't it better to live in a relationship with God than it is to be told you can't do this and you can do that? The pedagogues' responsibility, he was hired by the father, when his job was done, the boys' father would say, "You're done." He would move on. He moves the slaves into another position. "You've done what you're supposed to do. We don't need you anymore in this position." And the fundamental point of this particular passage is you don't need the Law anymore in Christ. There's no reason for you to go back, and that's one of the reasons why you read in the Book of Hebrews that the Law is like a shadow. A shadow couldn't change anything. It's just a shadow, but the real is faith. That's why he'll state in Hebrews 11, "Now, faith is the substance of things hoped for." The point is that we have something real, finally, and it is the faith.

Why should we not go back under the Law? I've oftentimes thought about these that go into the whole Judaism thing, and I'm going, "Why aren't you still doing the sacrifices? I mean, if you're going to go by the Law, do the whole Law. But the whole purpose of the sacrifice, the whole purpose of the feast, whole purpose of everything, I mean, Christ is our Passover. The whole reason for everything was to lead us to Christ. Once Christ comes into the picture, once your faith has now been inspired within you, the Spirit of God breathes within you. You go, "Though I'm faithless, He remains faithful, and He cannot deny Himself. God has sealed me by His Spirit, and I've become one with Him. Now, I operate not in the realm of 'do I have to, or can I do this?' Or 'where do I go?' but I operate in the realm of "I want to, I desire to, I long to." I want to be like my Dad." At this particular juncture, when this switch happened, then the child goes from being with the pedagogue, into the realm of coming alongside with his father. Now, we're not telling you to run your house this way, but what we're telling you is the context of history has given Paul the perfect example of "Why the Law?" Was the servant bad that was

training the child, helping the child, and keeping the child from hurting himself? No, he's good, but there's a time where he's no longer needed, and that's the Spirit of Christ. That's why we ask you, come to Christ. You know people will say all the time, "But I have to do this. I have to do that, Pastor." I say, "You're not walking in the Spirit." Once the Spirit comes upon you, you go, "What can I do to follow Christ? I long to follow Him." And you become a man.

The way it's going to be described in Galatians 4 is that you come into what he is going to call the "fullness of time." That word will literally make reference to the fullness of age. How do I come into fullness of age? By the Spirit of God. Now, here's the interesting thing to me, coming into maturity, you just can't totally nail it to a particular day. It's hard to do that in the sense of, when does that child go from being a child to being a man? When does that happen? You can't fully nail it, but you can see it. You go, "Something has happened. This boy is no longer a boy. This is a man." Now, that is a miraculous change of the Spirit of that one from child to manhood. That's our faith. Our faith is that. That's the difference. That's what our life is. If you're dealing with religion, you're still in childishness. I mean, they're telling you to say so many "Hail Mary's" or whatever, you're still in childishness. There's no relationship with God, but in Christ everything changes.

Closing Prayer:

Father, we come before You and we give You thanks for Your word, and how wonderfully You put things in a context that we could understand. We realized that You protected us and have been protecting us as we would protect our own children by telling them, "You can't do that. You can do this" and directing them in every step. We're protecting them, but our hearts desire is that they grow up to the point of saying, "I want to do the right thing." This, we realize is the Spirit of Christ within them. This is what we long for them to have, Your Spirit.

With your heads bowed and your eyes closed, we're asking you to make a genuine decision to follow God, to receive His son, who died on the cross for your sins; to believe in this, not on the basis of have to, but on the basis of love and affection, of admiration of the Spirit, of the relationship. We're asking you to come make Him Lord of your life, and ladies and gentlemen, what's going to happen is you're going to think differently.