



Old Testament law tells us that anyone who violates just one of God's commandments is guilty of breaking them all, and that every "lawbreaker" is under a curse. But the good news is that Jesus Christ bore the curse intended for us when He was nailed to a tree! Jesus reversed the curse! Follow along as we study the importance of faith over law, and how we are justified by faith alone in Christ alone.

1. **Galatians 3:1-14** – *"O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?—just as Abraham 'believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.' Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, 'In you all the nations shall be blessed.' So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."*
2. Paul's rebuke
 - a. Paul was straightforward in his critique of the Galatians.
 - i. Paul called the Galatians "foolish" and "bewitched" (**Galatians 3:1**).
 1. The Greek for "foolish" is **anoētos**, a term describing a person who has the capacity to think but fails to.
 2. "Bewitched" means "to be charmed; to have a spell cast on you."
 3. **DISCUSS**: Think back on a time when you were acting foolish. Why were you easily deceived? How can you avoid committing the same mistake?
 - b. Paul rebuked the Galatians for straying from the truth of the Gospel.

- i. After Paul left his church plant in Galatia, Judaizers came and spread false doctrine.
 1. Judaizers were Jewish Believers who tried to make keeping the law a requirement for salvation.
 2. Judaizers believed in Jesus plus laws such as circumcision, keeping Kosher, and the Jewish feasts and festivals.
 3. The gospel of “Jesus plus” makes salvation works-based.
 4. **DISCUSS:** What are some modern examples of how the gospel of “Jesus plus” has infiltrated Christianity? How do we make our case to those who have bought into this false gospel?
3. The insufficiency of the law
 - a. The argument
 - i. Paul used Old Testament quotes and examples to argue that no one enters heaven by keeping the law.
 - b. The two proofs
 - i. Abraham was righteous without the law.
 1. Abraham predates the law by over 400 years.
 2. Despite Abraham being without the law, God saw his faith and called him righteous (**Genesis 15:1–6**).
 3. God promised Abraham that he would have a son.
 - a. When God made this promise, Abraham was 75 and Sarah was 65.
 - b. When God fulfilled His promise, Abraham was 100 and Sarah was 90.
 - c. The Lord used this miracle to show that He was behind the birth of Isaac, the son of the promise, and that all things are possible with God.
 - ii. The law condemns us because nobody can keep the whole law.
 1. **Galatians 3:10–11** – *“For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.’ But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for ‘the just shall live by faith.’”*
 - a. If you break one law, you break the whole law.
 - b. *“The just shall live by faith”* is from **Habakkuk 2:4**.
 2. The Ten Commandments are hard to keep, and yet they are only a summary of the law.
 - a. By Jewish reckoning, the Torah teaches 613 **mitzvahs**, or commands.
 - c. The conclusion

- i. The law condemns rather than saves us.
 - 1. **Deuteronomy 27:26a** – *“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law by observing them.”*
 - 2. **James 2:10** – *“For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all.”*
 - 3. **Deuteronomy 28** lists a series of curses that will overtake those who break God’s law.
 - 4. **DISCUSS:** How does being aware of the curse that God placed on lawbreakers help you better understand the weight of sin?
- ii. Jesus took on our condemnation to save us.
 - 1. Jesus bore our sins on the cross.
 - a. **Galatians 3:13** – *“Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’).”*
 - 2. Because Jesus paid for our sins, we can be made right with God through His finished work on the cross.
 - a. **2 Corinthians 5:21** – *“For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.”*
 - b. **DISCUSS:** How do you keep Jesus’ sacrifice for you in mind? How does His sacrifice influence you?

4. The purpose of the law

- a. The law explains God’s righteous standard.
 - i. **Galatians 3:19** – *“What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”*
 - 1. Jesus is the promised “Seed” who came and fulfilled God’s perfect standard.
 - ii. Culture should not dictate our morality—God should.
 - 1. Our culture is living out **Isaiah 5:20** – *“Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; who put darkness for light, and light for darkness; who put bitter for sweet, and sweet for bitter!”*
 - 2. **DISCUSS:** Jesus’ culture condemned Him despite Him being the perfect Man. Knowing this, how are you careful not to base your morality on your culture?
 - iii. Morality is not always obvious without the law.
 - 1. In **Romans 7:7**, Paul said he would not have realized that covetousness was a sin without the law.

2. **DISCUSS:** How has God opened your eyes and convicted you as you read His Word?
- b. The law exposes sin in us.
 - i. Like a mirror, the law exposes our filth but offers no way to clean ourselves.
 1. **DISCUSS:** Have you tried cleaning yourself up with the mirror of the law? What happened, and how have you learned to submit to God instead?
- c. The law expresses our need for a Savior.
 - i. **Galatians 3:23–24** – *“But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.”*
 1. The Greek word for “tutor,” **paidagōgos**, is translated as “guardian” or “schoolmaster” in other Bibles.
 2. In those days, the tutor was a trusted hired slave with oversight over the moral education of the boys in the family.
 3. The tutor would bring the boys to and from school, to their instructor, until the boys grew up and no longer relied on him.
 4. The law is like the **paidagōgos** in that it serves to bring us to Christ.
 - ii. Though Christ fulfilled the ritual and ceremonial law, the moral law still stands, guiding us even though we are not saved by following it.
 - iii. But some, like the Pharisees, miss the Savior in their attempts to earn salvation.
 1. Some know that God is holy and that men are not, but they strive to become good enough for heaven.
 2. **DISCUSS:** How has trusting in God’s act of love on the cross allowed you to rest in the Lord rather than strive in the flesh?

* Unless noted, all Scriptures quoted are from the New King James (NKJV)