The Curse and The Cross

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[0:00] As we approach our text this evening, I'll introduce it by way of a question. And you guys don't have to raise your hand to answer this, but have you ever been told something! false about the scriptures and believed it? Maybe you came from a church that preached that stuff.

Some of you guys, I've had conversations with you and that's true. Or you've heard a speaker at a camp say something false that led you astray. Something you actually believe, not about Didymus. But this is what we're going to see in Galatians 3. If you guys want to turn there, I think it's on the board. That's my excellent graphic designing. I do not have the skill in that. I just went single color, two fonts. Yeah, two fonts. I needed two fonts. But we're going to be in Galatians 3 this evening. Hopefully, Lord willing, we'll get through about 14 verses. And what we'll see in Galatians 3 is that Paul takes false teaching very seriously. And just a little bit of background by way of introducing the book. The churches in Galatia and the region were being ravaged by false teachers.
And these false teachers are known as the Judaizers. And they were teaching, generally speaking, that you were saved by Jesus, but you also had to do works. Right? In that time, they boasted in you had to be saved by Jesus and circumcision. Right? That you had to have Jesus, but plus little parts of the law.
And in some cases, all of it. And one of the things you'll notice as we dive into our text this evening is that Paul takes a harsher tone with the Galatians. And that's because they began in the truth. Right? These are believers that he's talking about. He preached the gospel to them. They understood what the truth was. And they've been led astray by these guys. And so, basically, the main point that we'll come across when we read these 14 verses is that we're saved by faith in Jesus alone and not on works of the law. And for those of you taking notes, I'm going to break this passage down to basically four points, and I'll repeat them as we go through them. But the first one is that Paul talks about another gospel in verses 1 through 6. Then he addresses who he calls sons of Abraham in verses 7 through 9. And then he talks about the curse of the law in verses 10 through 12.
And finally, Christ's redemption. Basically, the climax of the text this evening in verses 13 through 14. And we've got a lot of ground to cover. So, I'll pray for us and we'll dive in. Father, I thank you for your word. I thank you for your grace. And Lord, I ask as we open your word this evening that, Lord, you would teach us from it. Lord, help me to speak truth. And anything that I say that is not true, Lord, help it to be forgotten, that you'd cast it out of all of our minds. And that, Lord, you would just glorify yourself in this evening. And it's in Christ's name that I pray. Amen.
[2:51] So, I'm going to read verses 1 through 6, and we'll begin. So, Paul is writing to the churches at Galatians. He says, Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you? Do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness. So, this is the title or this point that Paul is kind of making is this other gospel, another gospel that the Galatians are being led astray into believing, right? I will say this, harder words. And I tried to read that text in kind of a tone that Paul would have had. I mean, you see the punctuation, the exclamation points, and you see what he's saying, right? Harsher words come out of passion for the matter at hand. And Paul is both surprised and he's concerned at the same time. And he's not mincing words here because the issue he's addressing is extremely important. The language that Paul uses at the beginning when he says, who has bewitched you, that's to be lulled by some sort of magic spell, right? And our common trend throughout the scriptures is that we see that false teaching is taken very seriously. I was

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having a conversation with some students earlier this week and last week about what the danger is of false teaching. And the scriptures see it very seriously. And also, Paul's surprised that they have turned away from proper doctrine in pursuit of this false teaching, right? He calls them senseless for doing so, right? And that they had begun in the truth, and it makes no sense that they would abandon that in pursuit of a lie.

The Galatians started with the true gospel, and they even took communion biblically, but now they've embraced something else. And Paul calls it senseless. The false teachers themselves have their blame, but it's not as though the Galatians never had the truth to begin with. And Paul proves the foolishness of this false gospel, as we'll see, by appealing to two things, right? He appeals to Abraham in the Old Testament, as we'll see, and then he appeals to their personal experience of salvation. And he takes them back to their conversion and asks the rhetorical question. He said, did you receive the Spirit by works or by believing? And obviously, it was believing. It's like when you do something stupid because your friend said to, and you're sitting in front of your parents and say, well, would you jump off a bridge if they told you that too? Right? That's kind of the tone that Paul's taking here. And we know that it's by no other name that someone may be saved, as Peter says in Acts 4.12.

Paul says that they were begun by the Spirit. They didn't get saved by their own works. God put his Holy Spirit in them, and they repented and believed. God removed their hearts of stone and gave them hearts of flesh, as Ezekiel 36 says. And this is the same with us today. We didn't do anything to earn our salvation, but God began that in us. We love him because he first loved us. 1 John 4.19. It's foolish to think that we can do anything apart from the Spirit working in us. So Paul goes on. He says, having been begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? And Paul goes from their initial salvation, saying that having the Spirit begun your salvation at the beginning, right? Are you now being sanctified by your works in the flesh? And he says that our works can't save, and apart from the Spirit, they can't sanctify us either. Our flesh cannot make us more like Jesus. That's why we needed God's Holy Spirit to dwell in us, to do anything right. And this is a sober reminder for us today. A lot of times people will ask us if we're a Christian, and they'll say yes, and then they'll follow up by asking us why.

And if we aren't careful, we'll respond with, I prayed a prayer, or I walked an aisle, or I was baptized when, right? And those things may be true, but there's one major truth we can leave out. [6:59] The only reason I'm a Christian is because Jesus loved me and gave himself for me. We're tempted to answer that question with, I. And as we talked about earlier, the only reason I did anything was because he worked in me first. Remember who deserves the glory in this deal? Remember the words of John 3 30, he must increase, but I must decrease. And then answer that question when someone asks you why you're a Christian. And then Paul goes on, and he talks about their suffering in verse 4. He says, did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? When the Galatians first believed, there were a lot of Jewish zealots around them that were persecuting them pretty heavily.

And Paul asks, if that suffering and persecution that you went through for the truth of the gospel, was that in vain? You've turned aside to this foolishness, right? And if they went back to the law, they were basically saying that the people who persecuted them were correct. They were saying, you know what, I know that I stood against you because I didn't believe that you were preaching the truth, but I mean, you were right all along. And Paul also says that even if their suffering was in vain, he wants them to return to the true gospel. Regardless of how you suffered in the past, embrace the gospel today. That's what he's saying. And then he says that the Spirit works miracles among us. And there's some question there about what kind of miracles that Paul's talking about.

And he could be talking about two different kinds of miracles, right? He could be talking about like sign gifts, like healing and raising from the dead and stuff like that. Or he could just be talking about the miracle of salvation. And the point of both of those kinds of miracles is to point to God, not our own works. God is the source, not us. And that's Paul's point there. And this is the kind of ridiculousness that Paul is exposing in the Galatians. I don't know how many McDonald's fans we have in here, but it would be like trading a five-star restaurant meal for McDonald's, right?

They have essentially traded the word that brought them eternal life for a shiny-looking law that only brings forth death and despair. So which category do you fall under? Are you trusting in your works?

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Or have you repented and believed the gospel? Have you embraced this kind of word that leads to eternal life? Or are you trusting that your good will outweigh your bad? Remember that God doesn't judge the guilty for what they did right. He judges us for what we did wrong. This contrast between the flesh and the Spirit, as I was studying this text this past week and a half, I found this contrast between the flesh and the Spirit pretty insightful. Left to our own flesh, there's nothing but death. And we see Paul equate the flesh with the law several times in the text. He says the flesh and the law, they both bring about death, right? And this is what trusting in our own works brings.
[9:36] It brings foolishness. And in Genesis, we see it brings futility and ultimately our final judgment. Then Paul moves on to verse 6 to talk about Abraham. And he says, just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. And keeping this contrast between the Spirit and the flesh in mind, the only way to receive the blessing of Abraham, which we would call salvation, is by hearing the gospel and believing with faith. To further explain repentance, a lot of times you'll hear, you'll read in the New Testament or the Old Testament to believe or repent. And the other one is implied in the text, right? You can't have true repentance without faith, and you can't have true faith without repentance, right? And this is why sometimes you don't see both mentioned. Every time the gospel call is given in the Bible, right? If someone truly believes, repentance will follow.

And if they truly repent, it's because they believe the gospel. And back to Abraham believing God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Some of you guys may recognize that quote. Understand that it was belief that saved him, not his works. Understand that 14 years later, he would be circumcised. And 500 years later, the law would be given. He had no idea, right, about what works he needed to do, so to speak. He believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. And even if you judge him by his works after God makes his covenant with him, he fails multiple times. She's not my wife. She's my sister. And this is why James says that you're guilty of breaking, if you're guilty of breaking one point of the law, you're guilty of it all. And this is because God is so holy. It doesn't matter how many good things you do, because if you sin one time, you're worthy of eternal punishment. Abraham, like us, would have been hopeless if God judged him based off of his works, because he failed, like you and I.
And it's important to note that Abraham's belief was credited to his accounts, right? He couldn't put it there himself, but someone else had to put it there for him. Also, it wasn't indifference that was accredited to him. God didn't just think, oh yeah, he's got a blank slate now. But God thought of him as righteous, neither good nor bad. But like you and I, Abraham got righteousness. And Paul's connecting with his mention of Abraham, as we'll go on in the text, he's connecting Old Testament salvation and New Testament salvation together. They're one and the same. All saints are saved the same way, by repentance of sin and faith in Jesus Christ. So we've gone from another gospel. Now I'll read verses seven through nine, and we'll see that Paul mentioned the sons of Abraham. The sons of Abraham.
Verse seven, he says, In verse seven, Paul's refuting these Jewish false teachers that were saying you had to be circumcised in order to be right with God, in order to be a true son of Abraham. And Paul makes the argument from Romans four that Abraham was saved before he was circumcised, as I mentioned. Gentiles are saved as Gentiles, not Jews. No circumcision necessary. And all who have faith in God, like Abraham, receive the blessing of salvation that Abraham received. So we read this text and we look at sons of Abraham, and we think, what about the physical offspring of Abraham? And I'm not going to spend too much time, and I'm not going to dive into the fine details of this discussion, but I will mention some things that we can all agree on in the scriptures. That God had a special purpose for the nation of
Israel from the beginning. He set them apart himself, and he gave them certain, and that has some implications. He gave them his holy law and rescued them from captivity several times. He also shows them grace that no other nation in biblical history knows. And there isn't, and never was, a guarantee in the Bible that every single physical child of Israel will be saved. There are many people in the nation of Israel that never tasted salvation, but they got to enjoy the benefits of being part of the physical nation of Israel. When the nation prospered because they were following the Lord, they prospered as well.
[14:01] They enjoyed the blessings of prosperity for a time. They enjoyed the fellowship. They heard the preaching of the law and other things, but they never truly repented and placed their faith in God. One of God's special purposes for the Jews, as we see in the Bible, was to preach the

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gospel to the Gentiles, so that in that, they would be grafted into the family of God by faith. And there are people who say that physical Israel means nothing when it comes to salvation, but Paul didn't think that way, and neither did the other New Testament writers. If God hadn't used the Jews to share the gospel with the Gentiles, none of us would know the Lord, unless some of you guys are like physical Jews.

But one important point that Paul makes here is the difference between physical Israel and the church. There were more people in the nation of Israel than believers. Not all of them believed. And those who are of faith, I believe Paul's talking about these physical Jews who believe the Lord. And now all who are of faith are genuinely sons of Abraham, are God's covenant people, right? And Paul's talking specifically about Jewish believers. I had a pastor when I was in college. He would always say, this, that God doesn't have grandchildren. You don't get in the kingdom based on your last name.

You don't get in the kingdom because my dad was a preacher or whatever have you. It's by faith alone in Christ alone. And Paul says that the scriptures predicted this. A commentator, his name is William McDonnelly, put it this way. He said, the Old Testament is depicted as a prophet looking down the centuries and foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles as well as Jews on the principle of faith.

The blessing of the Gentiles by faith was not only foreseen by the Old Testament, but was actually announced to Abraham in Genesis 12, 3. Paul says that God justifies the Gentiles by faith. And it's the same way anyone in the entire biblical history is justified. Paul's contrasting that the Jews weren't saved by the law and neither were the Gentiles. Even as a Gentile, if you got circumcised, that didn't put you any closer to God than a Jew who was circumcised and didn't believe. Everyone enters eternal life by the same way, the same door, the same truth, and the same life. It's only by faith that one can hear those words well done on that day. The only way that Gentiles are saved is by hearing the gospel and repenting and believe. And notice that God used the nation of Israel first to do that.

And that's why Paul says in Romans 1, 16, some of you guys may have it memorized. I know Jamie does, right? For I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it is the power of God and salvation for those who believe, to the Jew first, then also the Greek, right? The gospel came to the Jews first and they preached the gospel to the Greek, to the Gentiles. Then he says something interesting. He doesn't say most nations. He doesn't say like all tribes of Israel. He says all the nations will be blessed through Abraham. And in context, Paul's talking about this very thing. He's talking about all the nations, all the nations, including Gentiles, right? Being blessed because Jews are preaching the gospel and the message of salvation to the Gentiles. And notice the connection that Jesus gave in the Great Commission. And he says that the apostles were charged with making disciples of all nations, Jews and Gentiles. And the church initially consisted of only Jews, and the only way other nations were blessed in any meaningful way was through eternal means. You can go overseas and give $100,000 to starving kids and plant a hundred wells, right? And these are great things to do. And I would never tell someone that they're wrong if they did those, but those things fade after a time. The money dries up, the well runs out, and people will eventually die. You can't take any of that stuff with you, but you can figure out where you're going to spend eternity. And that's the one thing that you take with you when you die. And that's one of the things that Paul's mentioning here. Nations are blessed ultimately by the preaching of the gospel. I was in college. I did BCM for about four and a half years. We went on lots of mission trips, and it just struck me. It just killed me. Like, my theology was solid, but I went on a mission trip to Puerto Rico, in which I got mistaken for being Puerto Rican like seven times.

[18:05] It was funny, because I was like, I was on the phone with my brother telling him, like, hey, I've been mistaken for being Puerto Rican twice. While I was on the phone with him, someone walked up to me and started speaking Spanish to me, and I was like, bro, like, I'm not, I'm not Puerto Rican, I promise. But we went on a mission trip to Puerto Rico, and we did some service projects. We served the community. We visited some old people and stuff like that. We tasted some great food, and I had a great time. It was the first time I'd been overseas, and I came back, and I came to my very biblical church, and it just struck me. One of the members of my church, good friend of mine, he's a pastor in Kansas now, he said, so who'd you get to share the gospel with? And I was like, that was the first question he asked me. He didn't even ask how I did, or like, what all we did? He said, who'd you share the gospel with? And it, it like struck me. I was like, you know,

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we never had any witnessing opportunities. As a matter of fact, there was a, there was a group from Maryland at like a Catholic college that was partnered with us. I don't know how all that stuff worked out, but don't, don't ask me. I did not plan the trip, and I do not swear by what happened there, but there was a Catholic group that took their seniors on a mandatory mission trip.

Once again, things are just crumbling, right? They were on a mandatory mission trip, and I realized that I shared the gospel more with those kids that we were with, that were supposed to be sharing the gospel with the natives, than I did with the actual people, right? And it just, it struck me even more that like, I mean, we can do all the service projects in the world, but the only thing that matters is what we do for eternity, right? So back to our texts. Paul, Paul calls Abraham the man of faith, and Abraham is held as the man of faith throughout the whole Bible.

Many times we're told to emulate the faith that he had, and the Bible's crystal clear that it was his faith that saves him, not his works. Now, what did Abraham do that caused him to be known this way? Well, it starts back in Genesis 12. A lot of you guys are in the Bible through the year plan, whether you're doing the Robert Murray McShane plan or the Navigators, which I did notice the Navigators plan is a lot more forgiving than McShane's. Like, you're reading four chapters a day, and you don't get any off days for the McShane's, but you have like five off days for the Navigators. But anyways, most of you guys have already read through Genesis up to this point, but in Genesis 12, when Abraham was a pagan, God spoke to him to pick up the things that he had and move to a land that he would show him, right? He didn't even know where he was going. And it only took two verses for Abraham to pack up everything that he had, right? His family, his flocks, and he headed to where God told him to head.

He had no idea specifically where he was going. And throughout the next 12 or so chapters of Genesis, we see Abraham have moments of struggle, yes, but he showed immense faith in God for the rest of his recorded life. He's most known for believing God's promise of a son to him in his old age, in the form of Isaac. And we also see in Genesis 12 that after his son is born, God commands him to sacrifice Isaac on the altar. And interestingly enough, I had a pastor preach through that particular text, and it just blew my mind. Just like the little details that you can see in a story that you can kind of like look over sometimes. But Abraham believed God and had faith in him. So interestingly enough, the scriptures say he rose early in the morning, the next morning, and got to work.

[21:12] And after Abraham had to wait so long for this promised son, God made him sacrifice the thing he treasured most in this world as an act of worship to him. And Abraham faithfully obeyed. This is faith in action. And his struggles that weren't recorded, or his struggles that were recorded, don't neglect a life of faith lived in complete service to the Lord. Now, I don't want to justify sin by any means, right?

Abraham did have his mistakes, and he had his sins. But we're quick to write people off the second that we find out that they're not perfect. I mean, newsflash, and the Bible specifically, every single character is flawed and sinful except for one. And it's easy for us to look at other people's struggles with sin and look down on them, but you and I are sinners too. So how does that apply to us?

The Bible is obviously not telling us to just mimic Abraham in everything, right, including his sins. And this also isn't telling us to just strive after the amount of faith that Abraham had, as if we could put a number on it. But the Bible is telling us to look at the object of Abraham's faith, who his faith was in. So let's rewind, go through that again, go through Abraham's life again through this lens.

It was God who delivered on his promise to bless the nations through Abraham and give him the land that he didn't know yet. It was God who protected Sarah, not once, but twice when Abraham faltered in his faith and delivered her over as his sister. It was God who provided a sacrifice in Isaac's place on the altar.

God would give what he treasured most in place of what Abraham treasured most. And we can look at Abraham's faith and gain a lot from it, but the main point the Bible is getting across is that God is completely faithful. God fulfills his promises. He delivers, he protects, he provides, and does everything else for us.

[22:55] Our faith, however the amount, is only meaningful because the object of our faith is great. Now to sum up this passage, God promises to bless all the nations through Abraham. Not because there was anything super special about Abraham, but it was because God himself was a good and gracious king. I didn't pick that song to do this Wednesday night. And Paul is building to the climax of his argument, and then our faith saves us, not our works. The only way to have the blessing of

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Abraham, i.e. salvation, is by faith in the same God that Abraham believed in. So we've gone from another gospel to Abraham.

Now we get to the curse of the law in verses 10 through 12, and I'll read. He says, For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse. For it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.
Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith. But the law is not of faith, rather the one who does them shall live by them. So in our text so far, Paul has gone, or he goes from showing what faith can do, to now showing what our works can't do.
Galatians 5 verse 4, later on in the text, Paul says, You are severed from Christ, you who would be justified by the law. You have fallen away from grace.
And this is the contrast that Paul's making. The Judaizers are preaching that you have to rely on the works of the law, at least to some extent, in order to be saved. First, excuse me, This blessing of Abraham only applies to you through Jesus plus circumcision, Jesus plus baptism, Jesus plus your own works.
[24:40] So he goes on and he talks about the works of the law. And in context, right, we know that he's talking about circumcision, but this translates to any work that anyone is doing and relying on to save them or to keep them saved.

In pride, people in these churches were starting to become Pharisees with their works. They were turning into the Pharisee in the parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector. Lord, I'm going to church. Lord, I've been circumcised. I praise you that I'm not like this tax collector over here, this Gentile, who doesn't know you, who's not circumcised.
Right? But the law can't bring a blessing. But it only brings a curse for us. So it's also important, he uses the word curse. And so we need to define, what is a curse?
And a couple of commentators have put it this way, and then I'll give some more context in the definition. Dr. John MacArthur says this, he says, A curse is a divine judgment that brings the sentence of condemnation.
Matthew Henry, a Puritan, he says this, The curse is wrath revealed and ruin threatened. It is a separation into all evil. And this is in full force, power, and virtue against all sinners.
[25:46] Now, you guys know the New Testament was written in Greek, right? And the Greek word for curse is different than anathema, which is what we see, right? Paul says that in Galatians 1, Let anyone who preaches a different gospel be anathema, right, or cursed.

But this word, this curse itself is ultimately the same, right? Those whose faith is in their works to save them and not the work of Jesus are under this curse. And there are many faithful preachers who have been clear about this message.
I would be failing in my duty as a minister if I didn't preach the same. If you are trusting in your works to save you or hoping that your good will outweigh your bad, make no mistake, this curse is on you right now.
Paul says all here, and that includes us today in this group, anyone who's trusting in their works. And this is hard news, but it's a gospel truth. In America, if we aren't careful, we can believe this false gospel and hope that we can do enough good to get it to heaven.
But as I mentioned before, that's not how any justice system works. Abraham's faith wasn't in his own works. The Lord showed him throughout his life that he was still a sinner, very clearly. And he trusted that God would provide the sacrifice, and that's the only way he was saved.
[26:53] And Paul also quotes the Old Testament. And in verse 10, he's quoting Deuteronomy 27, 26. It says this, Cursed be anyone who does not confirm the words of this law by doing them.

Then we get to verse 11. Now it's evident that no one is justified by the law. And Paul's even more clear on this thought in the book of Romans, specifically in chapters 3 and 8.
And this contrast between faith and works is growing even more. God doesn't declare us righteous. He doesn't put us in right standing with him based on anything but faith.
It's all about faith. Another thing to note is that in James, right, as we mentioned before, that if you can keep the whole law, if you can check every single box, but you have one mishap, you have one mistake, quote-unquote, you're guilty of it all.
Then he says that the righteous shall live by faith. And it was really interesting. So a lot of times, I mean, I've heard this text preached. I've read it. I've studied it in the past, and it never stood out to

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me.
[27:53] I've always thought, like, okay, so we live in the present tense. We live by faith in God, even through the hard stuff. But the original Greek in verse 11 actually reads this way. The just by faith shall live, right?

Those who have been justified by faith shall live. And this is profound if you think about it. Essentially, the only ones who live are the ones who have been justified by faith.
Everyone else is dead. Everyone else dies, right? The only people experiencing life after death are those who have been saved by faith alone. And Paul's making even more Old Testament quotes. He's quoting Habakkuk 2.4. And this is the point he's driving home. Or then we think, he gets a little bit obscure in verse 12. He says, but the law is not of faith.
Rather, the one who does them shall live by them. And as we sing in all sufficient merit, right? The law was never given to save us because we can't keep it. There's no faith in keeping the law.
[28:49] And another thing to think about is that this burden of the law isn't just for a day or a month, but it's every single law for a whole lifetime. That's why it's impossible for us.

I'll tell you, I was a little sinner. I'll tell one story. A lot of times I use this story whenever I am talking about repentance because a lot of times we think, oh, it's just feeling bad. And that's not true. It's part of it. Feeling bad, we call it contrition. But repentance is turning away. So most of you guys know I have three older brothers, but I'll talk about one, the one that's married to Joey's sister. And my parents remember this very vividly.
And we were at my grandmother's house. My grandmother had a long hallway. So my brother Dylan's a year older than me. And I remember him just getting on my nerves for something. And I was the youngest. I was like, I didn't get back a whole lot because I was just so small.
But there was one time he had gotten on my nerves. I was about three. You guys know those little like plastic bats that you play like wiffle ball with? Those plastic ones that like they make a loud noise. And if you swing it hard enough, it hurts. Well, my brother Dylan, he was in my grandmother's room.
[29:50] And I was standing at the very end of that hallway. I had one of them bats. And I called him. I said, Dylan, come here. And he takes off. And I just clotheslined him. Like absolutely. Like just knocked him out.

And in that sense, right, I was definitely sitting there. Right? If that didn't earn me hell, I don't know what would happen. But like in a sense, right, it's impossible for us to keep the law. I'll tell you, I was a sinner from birth.
Right? Just as all of us were. Right? Paul's making it clear that it's impossible to live by the law. The law was never given to us so that we could keep it. Right? So now we get to verses 13 and 14. And he talks about Christ's redemption. And I did call that the curse on the cross. But then I decided I don't want to title my sermon that. So anyways, Christ's redemption. Right? But I'll read.
Verse 13, he says, Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written, Cursed be everyone who is hanged on a tree. So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles.
[30:51] So that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. And the next two verses are the climax of Paul's entire message to us. Keep in mind, leading up to this point, he's talked about how we're dead in sin.

We can't keep the law. Our law brings about a curse and death. And then he gets to Christ. This is the hope that we have. And hope I give to any of you who have that particular curse on you right now.
Jesus redeems us from the curse of the law. We've all broken God's holy law. And we're worthy of being sent to hell for eternity as punishment. But he provided a way out.
The Greek word that he uses for redeems can also be translated as ransom. And as most of you guys heard Pastor Michael talk about it, right?
The word ransom means to pay the price for the freedom of another. Jesus in his work set us free from the curse of the law and the bondage of our sin by becoming a curse for us.
[31:50] He perfectly obeyed the law for his whole life. I mean, try that for a day. Especially you guys with younger siblings, right? And he obeyed the law for his whole life so that we would have a proper representative on our behalf.

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We needed someone sinless to pay our debt, to be our substitute. He was tempted in every way we were, but he never sinned. And he died the death of sinners on our cross so that you and I would be set free.
You know, to talk about parallels even more, as I mentioned earlier, God required of Abraham a sacrifice of the thing that he treasured most in the world to demonstrate his faith. But this was only to point to God doing the very same thing.
The only difference was that there was a replacement for the sacrifice of Isaac. God provided a sacrifice. There wasn't for Jesus. Just like Isaac, this also wasn't against his will either.
Jesus went to the cross and he gave his life willingly. So, then we look at some kind of obscure language, right? Paul says that he became a curse for us.
[32:52] And that raises the question, how did Jesus become a curse for us? What does that mean? And some people will take this and 2 Corinthians 5.21, where Paul says that he became sin, who knew no sin.

And a lot of people will take these texts and say that Jesus actually had sin in him on the cross. I've seen someone preach that from the pulpit. And that's not true. That wasn't the case. Jesus never had any sin in him.
And the Bible is very clear about that. But what these texts are pointing to is the fact that Jesus was treated as the worst of sinners on that cross. He became the curse for us and took the punishment that we deserved on the cross.
He was forsaken by God, enduring all that wrath for you and I. Jesus didn't have to do that. He could have left you and I in our sins to take the punishment ourselves.
But he did it anyways. And this is the love that God has for you and I. Paul says in Romans 5.8, For God shows his love for us, and that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us. He didn't have to do that.
[33:50] Hebrews is clear that without the shedding of blood, there is no forgiveness of sins. Make that note. Without the shedding of blood, there's no forgiveness of sins. And this is the only way that you and I could be saved.

The perfect one had to die for your sin and mine. The language that Paul uses is important here. Jesus became a curse on our behalf. And Paul loosely quotes the law in Deuteronomy 21, 22, and 23.
Talking about cursed is the one who hangs on a tree. Right? And the picture that Paul's painting looks like this. Right? In the Old Testament, if someone committed a crime worthy of death, they could be hung on a tree.
And the culture was that if you saw anyone hanging on a tree, you automatically thought that they were cursed by God. Right? They obviously sinned in a great way, and their judgment was death. Right?
And it's kind of interesting because if I hadn't told you guys that, you probably wouldn't have even thought that. We see this picture today as Jesus paying our sin debt. But the unbelieving Jews at the time saw that as proof that Jesus was cursed by God.
[34:53] And this passage is a direct picture of Christ. He was the one who would be cursed on that tree. Jesus demonstrated becoming that curse for us by hanging on that tree, on that cross.

1 Peter 2, 24 says, Then, as we talked about a little bit earlier, Paul talks about the blessing of Abraham.
And as I said before, it's salvation, ultimately. This right relationship with God was a blessing given only to Israel first. Then, through the preaching of the gospel, it was given then to the Gentiles.
And it was given to us Gentiles because we believe in the same Savior. The only way that the gospel came to the Gentile nations was the preaching of the Jews. And as a result, we Gentiles are adopted into the family of God.
And we have the same inheritance as a natural-born member of that family. Right? Going back to God doesn't have any grandchildren. He doesn't have any stepchildren either. Right? We are all loved the same by God through Jesus Christ.
[36:02] No matter what our last name is, what sins are in our past, what our skills are, or anything else. And that opportunity is open to you today if you would but repent. Genesis 22, 18 says specifically that through Abraham's seed, all the nations will be blessed.

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And this refers to Jesus, who was a direct descendant of Abraham. All the nations were blessed with salvation by grace through faith. Paul says that as a result of this preaching, that we all would receive the promised spirit through faith.
And this promised spirit is the seal of our adoption. The Holy Spirit is basically a down payment for our eternity. And this can get a bit deep, but I'll explain. So, when you buy a house, you probably don't have enough money to pay for it all up front.
If you do, good for you. But in most cases, when you buy it, the people you buy it from demand what's called a down payment. And it's usually about 10% of the total cost up front.
And this is to prove that you'll eventually buy the car in the end, or buy the house, whatever you decide to buy. Ignoring the amounts and numbers, the Holy Spirit is basically God's guarantee to us that we'll be saved from the wrath to come.
[37:14] God promised in Ezekiel 36 that he would put his spirit in us, and the spirit points to the work that Jesus did. And we understand that the only way we receive the spirit is by faith.

Faith alone, not works. And again, the contrast is that we don't get the seal of our salvation any other way. That was what Paul was saying. And that's why he's so concerned and surprised that the Galatians are turning aside to a different gospel.
You don't work for the spirit, but God gives him to us to dwell in us. So, as we close this evening, remember that it is God who is the author and finisher of our faith.
So, I'll give you a few applications, and I want to speak to two different people here. For believers, you didn't earn your salvation. Remember that. You were saved by the grace of God alone.
And maybe you guys have answered that question. Oh, yeah, I'm a Christian. I was baptized this day. And you probably meant that Jesus saved you, but I would encourage you to be specific with your language, right?
[38:15] And just as you didn't do anything to save yourself, you can't do anything to stay saved either. Remember that it is God who completes that work in you and take comfort in that. You can't fall out of his grace once you have it.

That's Philippians. And the only way to not be led astray by this false teaching like the Galatians is by knowing the word. If you don't study the word, you'll be tempted to believe these kinds of false gospels.
And as the text says, you who are righteous by faith, live. Go on and live. Live by faith in God throughout this world and enter into eternity. And hear those words on that day.
Well done. Good and faithful servant. But for those of you who haven't repented, understand that this curse of the law is on you right now. And I don't want to mince words here.
I want to be clear with that because the Bible is clear about that. There's hope though. If you would understand that the truth that you can't earn your salvation is true, you can't save yourself.
[39:11] You aren't a good person. And you can't cover your bad works up with good. And God will punish your bad deeds. And he'll send you to hell forever. There's hope in Jesus. As the text says, he became a curse for you because he loves you.

And you can have your sins forgiven today if you had but repent and believe. Confess your sins to God and express your need for him to save you. Believe in the gospel truth that he sent his son to die for your sins and turn from death to life.
So let me pray for us and you guys will break up into small groups. Father, I once again thank you for your word. I thank you for this truth that it seems like you pound into us throughout your word. That it is by faith alone and Christ alone that we inherit salvation. Lord, I ask that you keep us, both us adults in this room and in children, from turning aside to any different gospel.
Well, as if there is another one. Lord, help us to hold fast to the truth of your word. And I ask that, Holy Spirit, you would superintend every single small group conversation according to your will. And that you would help them to have productive discussions.
[40:13] And Lord, I ask that you would just bless all of our students for the rest of the week. And Lord, anybody in here that doesn't know you, who is hanging on that curse of the law, that curse of the law is hanging over their heads.

Lord, I ask that you would set them free from that. Lord, that you would expose sin in their life. That you would grant them true saving faith and repentance. And that all of this would bring you glory. It's in Christ's name that I pray. Amen.

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