

Why then the Law?

Galatians 3.19-25 ~ May 15, 2011

The Law does not Save!

- Gal 3.1-9 ~ Abraham was justified by the promise of faith
- Gal 3.10-14 ~ The Law on the other hand condemns us
- Gal 3.15-18 ~ The Law did not nullify the promise made to Abraham

v19a ~ “Of what good then is the Law?”

- v19c ~ “till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made”
 - The Seed is Jesus ~ (John 1 patterned after Genesis 1)
 - John 1.17 ~ “the law was given through Moses, but grace and truth came through Jesus Christ.”
 - Law reveals the wound ~ Jesus applies the balm of grace
- v19b ~ “It was added because of transgressions”
 - The law has many uses (Here are 2...)
 1. Restrains Sin (civil)
 2. Reveals Sin (spiritual)

1. The Law Restrains Sin (civil)

- Rom 13.3-4 ~ “[R]ulers are not a terror to good works, but to evil. Do you want to be unafraid of the authority? Do what is good, and you will have praise from the same. For he is God’s minister to you for good. But if you do evil, be afraid; for he does not bear the sword in vain; for he is God’s minister, an avenger to execute wrath on him who practices evil.”
 - Micah’s new orange Mazda with V6 ~ temptation to speed/race
- 1 Tim 1.8-10 ~ “[T]he law is good if one uses it lawfully, knowing this: that the law is not made for a righteous person, but for the lawless and insubordinate”
- Prov 29.18 ~ “Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint; But happy is he who keeps the law.”
 - Parents meeting and abstinence...
 - Law keeping is a good thing . . . **Read 1 John 1.1 & Ph 2.14-16a**
 - Molokai leper colony ~ law instituted...
 - Andersonville prison ~ draft riots of NYC 1863
 - 30k union troops ~ eventually Regulators were established

Xition: Let’s look at the spiritual application of the Law...

2. The Law Reveals Sin (spiritual)

- The law was given to make our sins evident to us
 - Our front storm door looks clean until the sun shines on it
 - The Law functions like the sun ~ it reveals the truth
- “No Fishing” stickers on hotel mirrors built on Gulf of Mexico
 - **Rom 7.7-8a** ~ *“What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, ‘You shall not covet.’ But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire.”*
- **Q:** *“Satan would have us prove ourselves holy by the law, which God gave to prove us sinners.”* ~**Andrew Jukes**
 - We may clean the storm door glass but ignore all other glass
 - We may not fish from our balconies ~ (*maybe we don’t like fishing*)
 - So we think ourselves most holy and pure...

So Paul has Convinced Them... But Now Another Question...

v21 ~ **“Does the Law oppose the Promise?”**

- **“Certainly not!”** The law is good...
 - **1 Tim 1.8** ~ *“[W]e know that the Law is good if one uses it lawfully”*
- **v21b** ~ If the law could have given life, it would have done so...
- **The law strips us of self-righteousness and leaves us humbled or hardened**
 - **Q:** *“Although the Law kills, God brings good out of evil. He uses the Law to bring life. God saw that the universal illusion of self-righteousness could not be put down in any other way but by the Law. The Law dispels all self-illusions.”* ~**Martin Luther**
 - **Q:** *“The Law is the hammer of death, the thunder of hell, and the lightning of God’s wrath to bring down the proud and the shameless hypocrites. When the Law was instituted on Mt. Sinai it was accompanied by lightning, by storms, by the sound of trumpets, to tear to pieces that monster called self-righteousness.”* ~**Martin Luther**
 - **Ex 20.18-19** ~ When God spoke from the mountain the people ran away
 - **Q:** *“When the Law drives you to the point of despair, let it drive you a little farther, let it drive you straight into the arms of Jesus.”* ~**Martin Luther**

Xition: The next 2 verses introduce metaphors for sin...

v22 ~ *“But... the Scripture has confined all under sin...”*

- The picture painted here is of imprisonment
 - The bars of the cell are sin, keeping us confined
 - *“Don’t the habits of sin feel like that ~ like a prison?”*
 - **Rom 7.22-24** ~ *“I delight in the law of God according to the inward man. But I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin which is in my members. O wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death?”*
 - The picture is one of a dead body being carried around . . .
 - Scripture has placed us in this prison of sin ~ the Truth imprisons us...
 - The Law cannot help us... Why? Because...
 - The Law wears the badge and patrols the prison!
 - That’s why it’s ironic to look to the law for salvation...
 - The Law put us in prison in the first place...
 - But this is God’s Lawman ~ above reproach ~ above a bribe
 - Only if this Lawman was corrupt could he set us free...

v23 ~ *“... we were kept under guard by the Law... kept for the faith...”*

- The picture painted here is of protective custody
 - The Law keeps us from being destroyed ~ from destroying ourselves
- Too few restrictions ~ too few laws ~ can lead to an early grave
 - Celebrities often escape restrictions the rest of us must endure
 - Ray, Johnny Cash (*Walk the Line*), Jazz (*PBS series*)
 - Christopher Bowman ~ (*US Olympic figure skater*)
 - David Carradine , Michael Jackson, hundreds...
- All people of the earth had been destroyed once in Noah’s Flood
- God added the Law to dampen fallen man’s enthusiasm for sin
- He added early death also to not allow sinners to live forever

v24 ~ *“the Law was our tutor to bring us to Christ...”*

- The word tutor doesn’t fully capture the meaning
 - The word refers to one who has full responsibility for the child
 - Nanny would be a better word ~ or perhaps governess
- Until the Seed comes . . .
 - Once God enters into our heart we take on greater self-government

Xition: And the Law still performs that role...

v25 ~ ***“But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor”***

- The Law protected us until we came to faith
- But now we are protected by faith...

Read verses 22 through 25 ~ emphasize each occurrence of faith

- Faith displaces Law as the major force at work in our lives
 - There are still many uses of the Law
 - But as Christians we are considered adults
 - We are responsible before God to live out our faith...
 - **Gal 5.13** ~ *“[Y]ou, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another”*
- *“Law and grace may be miles apart in essence, but in the heart, they are pretty close together. In the heart fear and trust, sin and grace, Law and Gospel cross paths continually.” ~Martin Luther*
 - Law and faith wrestle within us for dominance . . .

Freedom (*Christian Liberty*) is neither legalism or licentiousness

- Both legalism and licentiousness relate to man’s behavior
 - One says *“I care only about my immediate pleasure”*
 - The other says, *“I can earn God’s favor through my actions”*
- Licentiousness / lawlessness leads to an early grave
 - Rats with choice of two bars (*one a drug, one a food pellet*)
 - Christian friend has had 3 oldest children abandon the faith . . .
 - Two more still at home ~ Will they hold fast?
- Legalism is just to attempt behavior modification
- Christians may not hit the bar of pleasure until they die
 - But they may also not hit the bar of *“free grace”*
 - They hit the
 - *“good works”* bar –or– *“men’s approval”* bar –or–
 - *“look at me”* –or– *“I’m better than you”* bar
- **Our acceptance before God is not dependent upon our good works**
- **It is not dependent upon our outperforming anyone else**
- **We are not bound to serve the Law ~ we are free to serve God**
- **There is a difference...**

Let’s Pray