

No More Add Ons

Standing on Grace series

by Chris Famisaran

Okay, let's pray. Father in heaven, thank you for the opportunity, Lord, to gather together as a church family. Be with us as we continue to dive through the book of Galatians. Help us, Lord, to see your grace and what you've called us forth in Jesus name. Amen.

So out of the many times that you have visited this church, have you ever taken a moment to pause and look at the stained glass behind me? Okay, some of you. All right, some of you appreciate it. How many of you, this is the first time you've actually noticed it. Okay, we got one person. How many of you have ever actually noticed that we have monitors here in the lights? Okay. I'm grateful for that. You know why? Because it helps us to see. And also this screen, I love the screen because not only does it share what songs we're singing and the words to them. How many of you ever forget the words? I do sometimes. I have a monitor as well that helps me sing, but also it sheds light on the passages and the points that we're learning and we're trying to remember.

Now, what I want you to do, unless I actually point something out, I don't want you to look at the screen. How many of you are chuckling now? Because if you're told not to do something, what do you do? You go and do it anyways. Right? Right. I'm going to ask this again. See how many times you guys look at that screen as we go into Galatians chapter 3. Go ahead and actually open up our Bibles, Galatians 3.

I want to point out a couple things, and sometimes, you know, we see that the Galatians are being challenged. A little bit of context. If you haven't been here yet, Paul is writing, some would say he's rebuking them right off the bat, saying, basically, how could you change your mind so quickly? In fact, I wasn't planning on this because I was going to start a little bit later. But let's actually, I'm going to go to Galatians 3, verse 1. Okay. Galatians 3, verse 1.

And he. He says, you what? You foolish. How many have ever been called foolish? Or how many have you ever said called somebody foolish?

We. Okay, there's a couple people who are not afraid to admit it. Usually that's kind of a harsh statement, right? Kind of called foolish. Ooh, that kind of hurts me. It's like, because it points out maybe if I've done something wrong, it's like, ooh, I need to rethink how I'm doing things. Who has bewitched you before your very eyes? Jesus Christ was portrayed and clearly portrayed and crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you. Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

Okay, now I gave you a command. Don't look at the screen. How many of you have looked at the screen since. Don't worry, we're not saved by not looking at the screen. Okay?

Are you so foolish after beginning by means of the Spirit and are now trying to finish by means of the flesh? Have you experienced so much in vain? It really was in vain. So again I ask, does God give you His Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law or by believing what you have, what? What you have heard?

Okay, I know we've said this many times. Bill and I have said this. It's not we're not saved by what we do, but who we believe in. But if we truly believe in loving that person and allow that person, the Holy Spirit, to work in our lives, are we not going to change in the fruits of the Spirit? You're going to desire to not want to swear. You're not going to want to desire not to steal. You're going to want to desire to do good because you love God and you love your fellow neighbor.

Verse 6. So Abraham believed in God and it was credited to him as what? Righteousness? If you also go to Romans, I think it's chapter 4 as well. He, He. He breaks us down even more. But roughly, verse 7. Understand then that those who are faith are children of Abraham. In a sense, we are descendants. Maybe not literal, but spiritual. Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written by the book of the law. Clearly, no one relies on the law is justified before God because the righteous will live by faith.

Okay, again, it's not what we do, it's who we believe in.

Verse 11. Clearly, no one who relies on the law is justified before God because the righteous will live by faith. The law is not based on faith. On the contrary, it says the person who does these things will live by them. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. For it is written. Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole. He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Jesus Christ, so that by faith we might receive the promise of what? the Spirit.

Okay, so kind of here is a context. So Paul harkens Back and he goes to point out Abraham. Why does he point out Abraham? Because Abraham was considered a patriarch. God, If you look at Genesis 15, 12, 15 and 17, God has conversations with Abraham. In verse chapter 12, he calls Abraham from where he is at to go forth with a promise. He would also have many kids, mind you. How old was he at that time? I think roughly around 75 ish. Okay. Prime years to be a dad, right? Okay. His wife is a little bit younger than him. Prime years to be a mother. I mean, we're kind of scratching your head. That doesn't sound good, having a child that late in life. What if he's a wily one? He wants to run away. You got to try to grab and catch him, Right?

So God... So Paul refers to Abraham, kind of sets up this premise. Now of here we have what is now the law and the promise. So Paul writes a letter to the Galatians and the Pharisees, the brothers who are formerly Pharisees or maybe still Pharisees, the teachers. They're very convicted. They go in and say, hey, just believing is not enough. You gotta do more. You gotta be circumcised. You've gotta follow the law. And in chapter 2 explains that were not saved by the law, but by faith in Jesus.

Okay, as we pointed out earlier in Galatians 3:10, 14, Jesus takes that sin, that curse on himself and ultimately dies and redeems us.

So what Paul is saying here is it's not new. It actually even predates the law. The promises of righteousness through faith was made to Abraham before God gave Israel the law.

So I want to now start here. Let's go to our passages, a couple of passages we're going to look at primarily Galatians 3:15 through 29.

And then if you want. I want you to go back later today or sometime this week, look also at Genesis 12, 15, 17, and even Habakkuk 2:4 to help have context.

All right, so verse 15. Brothers and sisters, let me take an example from everyday life. Just as no one can set aside or add to a human covenant that has been fully established, so it is in this case. The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say and to seeds meaning many people, but and to your seed meaning one person.

Okay? It's not plural. It's singular. What is this singular it's talking about meaning one person who is Christ.

Verse 17. What I mean is this. The law introduced 430 years later also does not set aside the covenant previously established by God, and thus do away with the promise. For if the inheritance depends on the law, then it no longer depends on the promise. But God in his grace, gave it to Abraham through a promise.

Now, if you've been here for the last couple months, you know, we went through a series on the Ten Commandments, okay? And so we. From the time between Abraham and the. And the Israelites leaving Egypt was many, many years, roughly 400 years they were enslaved. And when they finally leave Egypt, roughly a couple of months later, Exodus 19, God calls all of Israel to gather together. He prepares them. Moses goes up on a mountain, comes back down, and in chapter 20, what does he do? God reveals how he wants them to live, honor and love God with everything, right? Keep the Sabbath. Don't have any images of anyone besides God. A graven image. Speak well of the Lord. And then the second half is, honor your parents. Don't lie, don't steal, don't murder, don't covet or try to take what is not yours. Basic principles.

And of course, if you continue to read on in Exodus, there are other things that God says. Hey, here is how I want you to live life. So this is how the Israelites are being asked to live.

Okay, let's go back to verse 19. Why then was the law given at all? It was added because of transgressions until the seed to whom the promise referred

had come. The law was given through angels and entrusted to a mediator. A mediator, however, implies more than one party. But God is one. Is the law therefore opposed to the promises of God? Absolutely not. If a law had been given that could impart life, then righteousness would certainly have come by the law. But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin, so that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

So the law was given to act it as a guide. You see how God wants the people to live by. This is how I want you to live. To honor me, but also love one another. Does that make sense?

Okay, but also. I love this last part so. But Scripture has locked up everything under the control of sin. So that what was promised, being given through faith in Jesus Christ, might be given to those who believe.

Does it say a specific group or to those who believe? To everyone who chooses to follow Jesus Christ. Amen. All right,

So if it's true, then why did. Why does God give us this law? How many of you have ever lived a perfect life? I don't want to see any hands. I don't want to say I'm like Paul, but I have my. My own baggage. I'm not a perfect person. I've made plenty of mistakes. I'm just like everyone else. I have desires. And sometimes it's easy. I could be selfish. I could be this. I could be that. Okay, now, I'm not raising. I'm not asking you to raise your hands, but it provides. It provides a guide. Not just a guide, but how can they live a life and how can they honor God? How can they love God with everything, but also love one another?

So somebody says it provided a framework for how one should live while waiting on the promise of God to send a Redeemer. Amen. And so God gives us ten Commandments, for instance, and actually shows how we can love God. And it's not super, super complicated, right? Don't misuse the name of God. Don't try to place anything in between you and God. And even, even the instructions that he gives. Verses 5 through 10. Is it asking a lot to not lie? Is it asking a lot not to steal? I mean, these are things that even before God has it

written down, aren't these truths that should have been evident from the beginning of time?

And let me, let me point it out, okay? The Ten Commandments are almost like it's the bare minimum on how you should love one another. Because if you're saying, well, I don't want to keep the Ten Commandments, what are you really, truly saying? I don't want to love God. I don't want to honor and love my brother and sister. Chew on that for a second.

The law acted as a guide. Unfortunately, though, we see that there are some, though, who are maybe overachievers who want to say, but is that enough? I want to do more Habakkuk. Let's actually keep a Note on Galatians 3. Okay? But let's go back to Habakkuk. And Habakkuk is in one of those smaller, smaller books of the Old Testament. It's before Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John. Habakkuk. It's towards the end of the Old Testament. Okay. It's before Zephaniah and it's after Micah. It's one of the last chapter, last books of the Old Testament. Okay, Habakkuk. And I want to go to chapter two, specifically verse four. All right, I see. I hear some pages still turning. All right, we there? Okay.

Habakkuk 2:4. It says, *see, the enemy is puffed up. His desires are not upright*, meaning the enemy they're kind of confident of themselves. But here's what I want to take away. *But the righteous person will live by his what, his faith or faithfulness*, as the NIV says.

Okay, okay, again, I'm trying to call out, we are not saved by the law. We are saved by our faith. Now, the law also acts as a guardian. Let's continue on.

Let's go back to Galatians, chapter 3, verse 23, Galatians 3, 23.

It says, before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that has come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came, that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

Now, at the time that Paul is writing this, it was common, especially if you had funds, you would have. If you had a son or child, roughly from the ages of 6 to 16, they would have a guardian to look after them, take them to school, help

them grow, teach, learn, and mature. After 16, you're roughly an adult. You don't need the guardian anymore. But this guardian will be there regularly, consistently, watching over, making sure that you did not misbehave and was somebody that could look after your child.

Paul equates this now, the law is that which kind of helped to create a guardian to help protect you from making poor choices. But now at this point, though, we see that Christ has come. Christ is redeemed, that guardian, the law. We're not beholden to the law because we're beholden to the love of Jesus.

As we continue now. Okay, verse 26. So in Christ Jesus, you are all children of God. Through what? Through faith. For all of you who are baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. How can we be righteous? Ultimately, we ourselves, we cannot be righteous because we're all sinners. But Christ covers us with his righteousness. That is how we are clothed.

Verse 28. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong in Christ, then you are Abraham's seeds and heirs according to the promise.

I love this passage because it shares that we're all under one banner, Jesus Christ. Paul will later use an example we're going to in chapter four of God is Abba or Father. Abba is the Aramaic term for Father. As parents, those of you who are parents, do you just let your children do whatever they want? Do they dictate how things go? That was a strong no, no, you set guide, you set rules because you want them to be protected. Do you tell them to go take a fork or a butter knife and stick it in the outlet? No. How many of you have done that? Don't raise your hands. I've done that multiple times. No, because you love your child and you don't want them to get hurt.

When they go ride a bike, you ask them to please wear helmets because if they don't ride in any way that they did when I grew up, when there was more free range, children going about, you know, how many of you remember when you came home when the lights were on? Remember that? Yeah, you could go run around your parents like, they'll be okay. We trust the neighbors, my friends.

We would go out to this, this canal. It's now concrete, but before it was just a. Basically a ditch with water that flowed. It was a canal that would take water to add to the river. And when it rained, it was like a swarming river. In fact, I think some guys took a boat and tried to raft down. And generally my friends, they were good guys, but there were times where we'd go down to the creek and somebody would be down there. Somebody was trying to say, hey, you want to smoke? You want this? You want that? And there was temptation. Fortunately enough, I had good friends who said no. But I wonder. I look back, man, my mom and dad let us do a lot that I don't think in today's age would be acceptable. I wonder, hmm, is that good or bad?

But later on, my mom and dad say, hey, here are some things that I expect of you. Not because I want to ruin your life, but you're getting older. You need to learn how to be an adult. So you give them responsibilities. And maybe as you're getting older, how many of you loved responsibilities? How many of you loved maturity? How many of you loved, loved rules? When you get to that teenage phase, I can think for myself because I know what's best. And as an adult, you realize, huh, you didn't know anything back then.

I think I've shared this. There was a little plaque on my. In the garage. I remember hung up. And I don't know who hung it up, but basically it said, ask a teenager, they know everything. We don't know anything because we're so young. We haven't hit life. There's still a lot of maturity to be learned. But these, these expectations, these rules are there to help teach a child to be to how to live life, but also to keep them safe from harming themselves. When you cross the street, you look left, right, left again, right.

You know, you don't want to have anybody running around with a butter knife or scissors. Sometimes it's not so obvious to kids, though, and especially even in our faith, when we're young, in our faith, spiritually immature, growing, we don't always understand everything. And sometimes we have to take that step. Obviously, we have to learn, but we have to ask questions. It takes time to understand.

And so the law, in a way, from the very beginning, acted as a protection, as a guardian and as a guide, but cannot save us because we're incapable of being

perfect. God does not expect perfection. God desires your heart and faithfulness.

Do you remember early 2000s, you remember McDonald's campaign, supersize me, where you could order whatever you want. You, you get two cheeseburgers, you can get a Big Mac. And they supersize it, meaning they give you the biggest drink, the biggest fries. Oh, that was awesome. Do you remember also, I think it was Morgan Spurlock. He since passed, but in 2003, he tried to challenge himself to eat McDonald's breakfast, lunch and dinner for a month. And you'd think as a kid, that would be amazing, right? And so he does it. Well, actually, the premise was he would go to a McDonald's and anytime they said, would you like to supersize it? He had to say, yes. And if you're a business, a company, you want to make money, you're obviously going to ask, do you want us to supersize it? So by the end of the month, he had gained a lot of weight. Now, to be fair as well, come to find out later, after, as well he was, he had some other personal choices that added to his health that did not bode well for him, but his health, you could see physically how he was. I think if I'm not mistaken, he looked relatively fit to afterwards. He just looked exhausted and tired and he did not look healthy.

And I think sometimes I wonder, you know, the people that were trying to trick the, or not trick, but they were the leaders in Galatia who did not have their perspective correct, would say, would you like to supersize the law? Would you like to supersize your faith? Ultimately, we have to see that it's not what we do, but who we are saved by. But if, if we are, if we love God and we truly allow God to come into our lives, it's going to be evident. The Galatians believed in Jesus, but there are some who also said, Jesus is good, but wouldn't it be better if you added the law. Ultimately, faith is what saves us. As you grow in faith, I hope and pray my friends, to not try but to experience God's love, to make changes in your life that ultimately reflect the love of Jesus because you want to do them, because you want to, not because you have to.

God made a promise to Abraham many years ago, long before even the law existed. And that promise came from grace. And if you look at the story, if you read the story of Abraham, did Abraham do everything perfectly? He was as flawed as anybody else. He got scared. He got anxious.

So Christ has come heed the word of God. We're all sons and daughters of God. We're all clothed in Christ. We are one community in him. May we not limit this gift, this good news to just our friends and our family, but throughout the whole world, everybody deserves an opportunity to hear the love of Jesus. Let's not gatekeep that.

Have you looked at the screen recently? Jesus has done much. Some may say, would you like to supersize your faith? But Jesus has already taken the difference. Jesus loves us for who we are because we are all children of God this week. Sorry. We're all children of God this week.

What unspoken expectations shape the way that you live out your faith?

Okay. What unspoken expectations shape the way you live out your faith? And where might you feel as though God's love must still be earned through your efforts?

This week, I want to challenge you. **Identify one area of your life where rules have replaced relationship and choose to substitute that rule with an intentional act of grace filled love.** Relationships are not demanded of where it is not an extraction, it is not a. Not a purchase. But ultimately we love because we love that person without expectation.

Where can you love grace filled love?

Let's pray. Lord, help us to see that your love is enough. Lord, we see the lessons that you gave to us, such as the ten Commandments, that yes, we want to live by them not because we have to, but because we truly want to love you with everything and to love our neighbor as ourselves. But ultimately though, Lord, we know that we are saved and redeemed through Jesus. So give us courage. Help us to ask good questions as we meet in groups, lead and guide us and watch over us. In Jesus name. Amen.

Grace and peace.