

# Galatians 3:15-29

## Seeing Failure and Finding Hope

Image Church // Galatians: Week 4

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### Introduce Philip and Marissa Grant

*I have with me, Philip and Marissa Grant... This is the year of transformation, where we want to see God do something in us and through us...*

- One of the primary places that happens is in our family ministry!
- On **Vision Sunday**, I held in front of you that this year, we wanted to bolster our efforts, energy, and intentionality when it comes to family ministries...
- This morning, we're continuing to work toward that. Philip is going to be joining Nikki to help build out our family ministry team! Philip is going to be our Family Ministry Associate, working with birth all the way to high school, allowing us to deepen our opportunities and widen our impact when it comes to the next generation!
- Pray

### Introduction

*Celebrate the salvation from last week: We care about one more!*

**If you have your Bible, turn to Galatians chapter 3...**

**Build the tension...** *Did you know that studies show that the hardest thing to do in all of sports is hit a baseball?*

- *0.45 of a second to decide and swing...*
- *Only sport you can fail 7/10 times and make it to the Hall of Fame!*
- *That's why baseball is a game of failure....*

- Maybe you've been to a batting cage with some friends...
- You're the guy that turned the speed to 80 mph and actually could hit one out of your friend group!

The problem is, that actually isn't that impressive because there are professionals getting paid millions that can hit a 100mph fastball in front of thousands of screaming fans...

Here's what we're gonna see is that Paul's the guy standing outside the batting cage saying, *You're not that good...*

### Galatians 3:15-29

<sup>15</sup> Brothers and sisters, I'm using a human illustration. No one sets aside or makes additions to a validated human will.

**Will** = like the final will and testament when someone dies...

**IOW:** You can't change up someone's will after they die. What's been declared in that will and testament is **final**... And there's nothing that can change that...

- In the same way, what God has declared is **final**. Nothing can change that...

**Verse 16:** Now the promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. He does not say "and to seeds," as though referring to many, but referring to one, and to your seed, who is Christ.

So, remember, there was a group of **false teachers** called the **Judaizers** that had come to the region of Galatia and were teaching a perverted gospel... **Jesus + works of the law = Salvation...**

- Which is the opposite of the **true gospel**, that is, ... Which is the gospel that Paul's preached to them from the jump... And yet people are falling prey to this false gospel...

So Paul's writing this letter to confront what's happening in the region of Galatia...

And Paul spent the first half of **Chapter 3** making the case that the law **does not save** us or **change** us...

- **Example:** Abraham...
  - He **believed God, and 2 things happened...**
  - He was declared **righteous...**
  - God **brought life** through Abraham when he wasn't capable of producing it...<sup>1</sup>

Showing us that, similarly, when we believe in the finished work of Jesus, we too are **declared righteous**, and experience **new life** through the power of the **Holy Spirit**.

And he said back in **verse 14**: God made a promise to Abraham for the sake of the world through Christ- that we receive through the Holy Spirit when we believe in the finished work of Jesus...

Well, here in **verse 16**, what Paul's doing is elaborating on the promise because these Judaizers thought that the promise was about Jewish people and the law...

- Paul says the promise isn't about all the **seeds** that came through **Abraham...**
- The promise that God gave Abraham was about **a seed, Jesus** who would bring salvation to all people through faith alone in His finished work!
  - *This ain't about y'all it's about Him!*

**Verse 17:** My point is this: The law, which came 430 years later, does not invalidate a covenant previously established by God and thus cancel the promise.<sup>18</sup> For if the inheritance is based on the law, it is no longer based on the promise; but God has graciously given it to Abraham through the promise.

Paul brings everything together:

- Paul's saying what God declares is final, just like a human will and testament...

- And God made a promise to Abraham that ultimately pointed to Jesus, and that promise came **430** years before the law...
- Abraham was saved through faith in God's promise...
- There's no way that salvation comes through the law- to say that would be to reject the promise God gave Abraham...

**At the heart of what Paul is here is that:**

- What God's extended to us is **not** based on our performance...
- What God's extended to us is based on what He's promised...<sup>2</sup>

**Illustration:** *Tipping is everywhere now, even in takeout and retail stores... It blows my mind... I'm like, do I have to tip after the bathroom next?!?*

- *Tipping is based on the performance...*
- *If I just walk up and give a check to someone who works at a restaurant or store, that's a gift that I'm giving regardless of their performance...*

*This is the gospel, and it's the heart of what Paul's getting at...*

**But that leads us to a question... Then, what's the point of the law?**

- *Great question. Look at verse 19...*

**Verse 19:** Why then was the law given? It was added for the sake of **transgressions** until the **Seed** to whom the promise was made would come.

Paul says that the law was given **for the sake of Transgressions...**

- **IOW:** The law was given so that we would see out sin...

Paul says in **Romans 4:15** that *where there is no law, there is no transgression...*

- **Transgression** is when you willfully and knowingly break the law... Overstepping: a conscious violation...

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<sup>1</sup> Tim Keller, *Gospel and Faith*.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid, *Gospel and Law*.

The law gives us tangible evidence of the reality of how jacked up our hearts really are... We get to see the willful rebellion against God that we choose...

Paul's going to flesh this out more in just a little bit...

- But a good way to think about the law is that it's a **mirror and a map...**
  - **Mirror:** see your sin...
  - **Map:** leads you to Jesus...

Paul says that the law was given so that we would see our rebellion, and then he shows us that the **only freedom** from the state that we're in comes through the promised **Seed**, which Paul said right before this (**verse 16**) is Christ!

Then, in light of this, Paul says in **verse 20**:

**20** Now a mediator is not just for one person alone, but God is one.

**21** Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? [IOW: Do the two work against each other] Absolutely not! For if the law had been granted with the ability to give life, then **righteousness** would certainly be on the basis of the law.

**Does the promise and the law work against each other?**

**No**, because the purpose of the law was **never** to give life or make you righteous!

- The purpose of the law is to show us that we need new life!

**Andrew Jukes** put it this way: *Satan would have us prove ourselves holy by the law, which God gave to prove us sinners.*<sup>3</sup>

**Verse 22:** *Paul's going to show us how all this fits together...*

**22** But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin's power, so that the promise might be given on the basis of faith in Jesus Christ to those who believe. **23** Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed.

There's no **conflict** between God's law and God's promise. There's actually **continuity** between the two! They work together...

Paul remembers his own experience before he was saved.

- Paul wrote in Romans 7 that there were laws that made him see he was morally helpless. IOW he couldn't save himself
- *This is the purpose of the law: It shows us that we do not just "fall short" of God's will, but that we are completely under sin's power.*<sup>4</sup>

**Illustration:** *Jail... If someone blind folded you and you took the blindfold off and you said I'm in jail... How would you have gotten to that conclusion?*

- *The prison bars around you...*
- *The law is like the prison bars around us... It's the thing that shows us that we're locked in by sins' power...*
- *And there's no way that you can escape...*
- *You have to be set free- the door has to be unlocked and opened...*
- *This is what Jesus does when we surrender in faith!*

And then Paul says in **verse 24**

**24** The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith. **25** But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,

Paul says the law served as a **guardian**...

- In the original language, a **tutor**- often appointed to watch over young children and to train them in their behavior...

**Here's what's interesting about a tutor**... A tutor can lay out how a child should behave, but ultimately, the tutor can't change the child's heart toward that good behavior...

<sup>3</sup> Tim Keller, via Stott, p.90, *The gospel and the law*.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid.

In the same way, **that's how the law functions**... It showed them how they should live, giving them **direction** and **restraint**, but it couldn't change their hearts...<sup>5</sup>

**John Stott** puts it this way: *After God gave the promise to Abraham, he gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The law exposed sin, provoked sin, [and] condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man's respectability and disclose what he is really underneath--sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself. And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft-pedal sin and judgment.*<sup>6</sup>

\*Keep in mind Paul's **not anti-law... He's anti-salvation by the law...**

- **Note:** Paul never does away with the law...

**Here's the point Paul's making here:** Once the law has done its work allowing us to see our sin and God's Judgment... We no longer need it to act as a tutor, because, through **faith** in Jesus, we receive the power of the **Holy Spirit** who becomes our teacher and our guide...

- **Jesus said in:**
  - **John 14:26:** But the Counselor, the Holy Spirit, whom the Father will send in my name, will **teach** you all things and remind you of everything I have told you.
  - **John 16:13:** When the Spirit of truth comes, he will **guide** you into all the truth.

**Question:** since we're no longer under the supervision of the law...

- Does that mean we can live however we want?
  - Short answer: No...
- What about this, what is our relationship to the law now?
  - Paul never says that it's gone...

*This is where Paul's going to take us in the weeks ahead...*

<sup>5</sup> Thought adapted from John Piper, sermon. *If you are Christ's, you are heirs of the promise*. May 1, 1983.

<sup>6</sup> Via Tim Keller, *Gospel and Law*

**Verse 26:** for through faith you are all sons of God in Christ Jesus.

**All sons?!?** In ancient cultures, daughters could not inherit property. "**Son**" meant "**legal heir**," and that was a status forbidden to women.

But the gospel tells us that we are all sons of God in Christ. **IOW:** We are all heirs... This is not a discriminating thing Paul's saying here, it is a unifying thing!

- **BTW:** Ladies, keep in mind that Paul also describes all **believers** as being the bride of Christ (Rev. 21:2).<sup>7</sup>

**Verse 27:**

**27** For those of you who were baptized into Christ have been clothed with Christ. **28** There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male and female; since you are all one in Christ Jesus. Paul's going to tie this back to the promise... **Verse 29:** And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.

**Application:**

**Failure and depravity:**

- *The law shows us the reality that we don't measure up!*
- *10 commandments reference first 2...*
- *We not only sinned, we enjoyed it...*
- *Romans 3:23: For all have sinned...*

**Hope:** Being clothed in Christ: New Identity in Christ

**Baptism as a picture of our hope and our identity!**

- Paul says that for those of you that have been **baptized**-pointing to baptism as evidence of faith in Christ...

**Our baptism marks the entry into the people of God: A people from all people**

<sup>7</sup> Tim Keller. *Galatians for you*. Chapter 7, Part I Children of God.

## Conclusion [Vamp]

Through the law we see our failure- but through the law we find incredible hope...

- Call to respond in faith...
- Call to baptism...

Call to *remember your baptism- because in it, you're reminded of your identity...*