

Sermon Series: Galatians
VGroup Sermon Study Guide for: Purpose of the Law, Galatians 3: 19-26
May 19, 2024

Helpful Tips

1. Randomly assign the scripture readings to different people in the group. This gets them into God's Word.
2. Generate conversation through questions. Let the group know you will be randomly asking people questions if someone does not immediately respond. Make this lighthearted and read the room. Some people could get very uncomfortable, and others just need a kind nudge to start talking.
3. It is ok if you do not finish the lesson. If people are reading God's Word and conversing, then do not rush through the end. If conversation is getting off track, then bring them back in and go to the next step.
4. Watch the sermon before you prepare and look at any of the background notes provided for you.

Scripture Passages: Galatians 3: 19-26 (break these verses up among the group), Galatians 2: 16 / Romans 3: 9-12 / Galatians 2: 21 / Matthew 19: 16 / Matthew 16: 24-26 / Exodus 20

As the leader, watch the sermon in addition to the reading the above scripture list.

Starting the Conversation: (use the following questions to get people talking)

Discuss the buttons on blouses verses shirts story:

I had no clue about that but now I understand why the buttons are on the left. As we continue our study in the book of Galatians, we have a similar story. Paul had been busy teaching the churches in Galatia how we are justified by faith in Christ. A person's trust in Jesus was what put them in good standing with God. And the people were thinking, "If that's true, then why do we even have the Law?"

Questions to ask:

1. Why haven't we changed the buttons to be the same by now?
2. What routine in life do you do now without knowing where it came from? Is your steering wheel on the right side of the car? Would you prefer that your hot water faucet be on the right side?

Have someone read Galatians 3: 19-26

Central Point:

Today in our passage of Scripture we are going to see Paul pointing out to the church what the purpose of the law was. Now when Paul mentioned the Law, he was referring to the 10 Commandments, the civil law, and the ceremonial law of the Old Testament. But now the people were living in New Testament times. Some believed the law was outdated; that it no longer served any purpose. But Paul shared what the law's purpose was.

Questions to ask:

1. Who can recite the Ten Commandments? See Exodus 20
2. Do you think the law is outdated? Why? Why not?

Background:

The churches in Galatia had fallen victim to false teaching after Paul had left. The false teachers had come in and told the church it took more than just placing your faith in Christ to be right with God. You also had to follow the law. And the first couple of chapters Paul debunked what they said. All that was needed was faith in Jesus. So why did God give the law then? What was the point of it? It's here Paul shared the purpose of the Law.

1. Make You Aware of Sin - Have someone read Galatians 3: 19-20

Paul was addressing the elephant in the room. In the previous verses he had shared that the covenant promise God had made with Abraham was greater than the Law. The following of the Law would not seem like it would be that big of a deal to a church that was made up mostly of Gentiles. Remember, false teachers had come in and were telling the Gentile Christians that to truly be Christian they had to become more Jewish!

Gal. 2: 16, "no one is justified by the works of the law but by faith in Jesus Christ. And we have believed in Christ Jesus so that we might be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no human being will be justified."

So, then what was the purpose of God giving the law?

It was to make one aware of their sin. How do you know you are a sinner if you do not even know what is right and what is wrong? This was what the law did. It is why Paul wrote the Law was added because of transgressions. In other words, the Law educated people in knowing they were sinners. The Law was the track one was to follow to get to their desired destination. But we all fell off the tracks.

Questions to ask:

1. Who here has been on the wrong track? What happened?
2. How hard is it to get on the right track?
3. Assuming you are on the right track, how can this analogy help you help others to get on the correct track?

Rom. 3: 9-12, "What then? Are we any better? Not at all! For we have previously charged that both Jews and Gentiles are all under sin, as it is written: There is no one righteous, not even one. There is no one who understands; there is no one who seeks God. All have turned away; all alike have become useless. There is no one who does what is good, not even one."

Discuss the lady on the cruise ship:

On the last night of her cruise, she decided to splurge and get dressed in her evening gown and go upstairs and enjoy an expensive dinner. She ate like a queen that night. At the end of the meal, as the waiter came around to clear the table, she told him, "I'll have the check now please." The waiter looked at her funny and asked, "What do you mean?"

This was the gist of Paul's message. When you place your faith in Christ, you have received the whole package for the trip. Tips, meals, travel, and lodging are all taken care of. You trying to pay for and arrange it is pointless.

The job of the Law was to point out the inadequacy of our efforts. Its job was to be like a mirror that we investigate so we can see where we need help. The mirror is not there for us to admire ourselves. It's there to show us we need help.

2. Demonstrate That You Have a Need - Have someone read Galatians 3: 21-23

The false teachers were saying that it was through the following of the Law that one would find life; that one would secure their rescue from the wrath of God. In one sense, this really makes sense to me. God gave a list of rules and if we follow them then we are good. But Paul pointed out how that idea was foolishness. The law did not set people free. The beginning of v. 21 was Paul anticipating the next question people would have about this. He asked, *"Does that mean the law's contrary to God's promises?"* Or to paraphrase, *"Why would God give us the law if it wasn't going to do us any good to follow it?"*

If keeping the law led people to righteousness before God, then salvation would come thru the law. But that was not the purpose of the law! Paul started off by pointing out that the law is useful in that it lets us know the ground rules. It points out what is in bounds and what is out of bounds. If I could keep myself in bounds by my own good works then there would have been no point to Christ coming. There would have been no point in His crucifixion or His resurrection.

Gal. 2: 21, *"I do not set aside the grace of God, for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died for nothing."*

So then why did God give us the law if it cannot rescue us?

The law demonstrates our need for rescue. When we see the Law, it quickly becomes apparent it cannot be perfectly kept. It quickly becomes apparent that we need help!

V. 23 *"Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed."* The word "confined" means "to hem in, to shut in on all sides so that there's no way of escape."

The Law makes it very evident that no one can live a perfect life. It makes it evident that we are all in need of help; we are all prisoners because of sin. The law does a great job of pointing out how desperate we are.

Discuss the man with dirty glasses at the gas station:

As he was about to get out of the car, his wife reached over and removed his glasses. She carefully wiped them with a tissue, then put them back on his face. The driver embarrassingly slumped down into his seat as he looked up and saw a spotless windshield.

The law's like that. We can spend our lives working to wipe the junk out of our lives. We try this by trying to do more good things than bad things. We saw the commands of God in Scripture and think, "If I just follow these, I'll get my life back in order." But at the end of the day the junk's still going to be there

because we cannot do enough to get it all off. We are stained with sin. The law is like a light in darkness. When you live in darkness it is hard to see the grime. But when the darkness is exposed to the light, you can see all the junk. That is what the law does.

Questions to ask:

1. Do you currently have a dark spot in your life? How can we help?
2. Why is it so easy to see others dark spots and not even admit our own?

3. Lead You Safely to The Savior - Have someone read Galatians 3: 24-26

Paul said the law served as a guardian. This would have been easier for the Galatian church to understand than us. Slavery was a common practice in this day and very often the slave owners had servants who supervised their children on the way to and from school. The role of the guardian (it could also be translated 'tutor') was to make sure the children studied, did their school work and were obedient. As you can imagine, it required them to be strict with the kids. If they had to spank them to get their attention, they would do it. Now these children did not remain under the eye of their tutors forever. The tutor's job was to take care of them until the child was old enough to start taking care of himself, until he was old enough to be responsible as an adult and citizen. Often the child and tutor would remain close into adulthood. The difference was that the tutor no longer had authority over his former student.

That is the law in a nutshell. The job of the law was to lead and guide us as children until we grew up and placed our faith in Christ. The job of the law was to get our attention and to point us to the Savior. And once the child came to Jesus, then they were no longer under the guidance of the Law but were now subject to Jesus. The law had served its purpose; it had done its job which was to safely lead them to the Savior.

Questions to ask:

1. Who are you tutoring?
2. Who is tutoring you?
3. Notice how the law guides not condemns. Why do we get trapped justifying the condemnation rather than accentuating the guide to lead someone to Christ? Remember, love the sinner hate the sin.

Remember the story of the Rich Young Ruler who came to Jesus?

Matt. 19: 16, "Teacher, what good must I do to have eternal life?"

Jesus replied in v. 17, *"If you want to enter into life, keep the commandments."* Jesus was not telling the man the Law would bring him salvation. He was pointing him to the law to help him see he needed a Savior! The man said he had kept the law, but Jesus followed that up by telling him to give up his wealth and then come and follow Him. How did the young man respond to that? In v. 22 we are told, *"When the young man heard that command, he went away grieving, because he had many possessions."*

The law did not save him, but it brought him to Jesus. That is what Scripture does for us today as well. It should bring us to Jesus as we recognize we cannot make ourselves right with God on our own.

Discuss Emily and Erik's dinner date in Ridgeway:

But I had a solution. I pulled out my iPhone and turned on the flashlight to light up the menu. And that was the solution. More light enabled me to see the menu. More light meant more visibility.

The Law is like the light. It helps people see their need for a Savior. That is what happened to the rich young ruler. He could not do all that the law required of him. He could not completely give up the world and follow Jesus. But when he investigated the law and saw where he was lacking, he had a chance to respond.

Jesus said in **Matt. 16: 24-26**, *"Then Jesus said to His disciples, 'If anyone wants to come with Me, he must deny himself, take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever wants to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life because of Me will find it. What will it benefit a man if he gains the whole world yet loses his life? Or what will a man give in exchange for his life?'"*

How did the man respond? He responded by walking away from Jesus and holding onto his treasures.

Questions to ask:

1. If you hand onto just a couple treasure, is there an issue?
2. Which worldly treasures are you holding onto? Is it hindering you? Your spouse? Your child? Your coworkers? Your fellow Christian?

Conclusion:

Follow Jesus, and you will be forgiven.

Follow Jesus, and you will find eternal life.

Follow Jesus, and you will escape death.

Follow Jesus, and you will find meaning and purpose for your life.

Is there any purpose for God's law today? Why did God even give us the Law?

First purpose of the law is to make you aware of sin.

Second purpose is to demonstrate you have a need.

And the final purpose of the law is to lead you safely to the Savior.

Paul wanted the Galatian churches to know they needed a Savior. God gave us Scripture so we would know that we need a Savior.

Jesus is the only one who can rescue us from sin.

If you would like for that to happen in your life, pray with your group for Christ to accept your surrender of your life to Him, forgive your sins as I believe you lived and died for me.

Announcements:

Baptism – May 19

Graduation Recognition Sunday – May 26

Last Week Luau at Roy Lynch Park – May 29, Downtown Campus

WinShape Camp – June 3-7