

The Curse of the Law and Christ Our Redeemer

Galatians 3:10-14

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Galatians Chapter 3, verses 10 through 14, reads as follows:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'—that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Chapter 3, verses 1 to 9, we've been looking at, over the last two weeks, Paul's proving of the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. And in verses 1 to 5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith is what brought into your lives this work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6 to 9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. And he says, "Just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham." And then he explains how it was that Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is, if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

And now, in verses 10 to 14, he shows them that the pathway of the law,

meaning if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law, he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses, from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10 to 14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages all within just a space of three verses to once again bolster his argument from the word of God, so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing in verse number 10 to 14 the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to one of God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but

God's face is against them. What that means is man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that the men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," and whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus Chapter 20, verse 2-3 says, "I am the Lord which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And then He says to them, 'You shall have no other gods before me.'" What is God saying? He says, "You are in covenant relationship to me, not because you don't have any other gods before me, not because of these

things. You're in covenant relationship to me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of my love. I set my love upon you, and I chose you for myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live among you, and you're going to have my presence there, and all that is if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan, said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the 12 tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings and cursings. And in Deuteronomy Chapter 27 and Chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' 'Cursed is he that goes into another god or commits fornication.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen,' and 'Amen.'" And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God.

And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against Me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience My presence, and you will be moved out from—you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer.

And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they

stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of Scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship or covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number 10 with me in Galatians Chapter 3. He begins by these words: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight.

And Paul says if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." And what Paul says here, "Okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His Son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going to make you accepted in the sight of God."

And Paul says, "Okay, understand this: that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse." Why? "Because the Bible says, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue,' and listen to these words, 'in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'" You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him? He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God. And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience."

And he says, "If you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and

you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you." Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" I love it. He quotes Habakkuk Chapter number 2, verse 4, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says the law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. "The just have always lived by faith." "For by grace you have been saved through faith" is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, "Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law, would say, 'The just shall live by faith.'" Why? "Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law." Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation.

And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise, meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification. Paul says in Chapter 3, verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one Lamb of God that would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins.

And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it." Reason number three, and final reason here in verse number 12, why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus Chapter 18, verse 5. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in You, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore

receive me in Your sight," Paul says no, the law is not of faith. And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God.

And what he's simply saying is there is judgment that will come upon you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, there in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please; it doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And Paul says this is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed.

You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies, therefore, to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His Son. And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law, where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice." Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come.

And so he's saying if you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation. And Paul's saying, of course, "O Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Who would want to live under such a way? John Chapter 3, verse 36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God.

You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In Scripture, when you see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say what you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse. But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says Christ is God's Redeemer.

You see, all those commandments that you could not keep and so therefore you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin? He says there is a Redeemer for such of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unfulfilling covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

And he points the believers here to a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all the Scripture: "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse." He is both lawgiver and judge who applies the curses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says by becoming a curse for us. Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy Chapter 21, verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now what happens in our minds, we start thinking, oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died. It's more than this. It's more than this.

You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker, and the full weight of the law has been been been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by

God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is the—this is how they—they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now, Christ became a curse for us. And He hung on a tree. Well, He didn't break the law. And wait on a minute, wait a minute. You're saying that God judged Him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking Him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law, the curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on His Son for our redemption.

He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us. Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge My Son for His people."

As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law.

And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works. God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His Son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us.

And that's why it is probably said in Scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is My beloved Son, My Son of My love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross crying out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness

upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment. And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, O God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit, that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross. "What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this, O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?"

Let me ask you this this morning: How is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance

before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience.

And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wrestle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful and I'm obedient and I'm good and I'm righteous and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past, and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "but the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you."

Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to my commandments, but because I love them. And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of Scripture that there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus?

All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "My Galatians Chapter 3, verses 10 through 14, speaks to us with profound clarity. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'—that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In chapter 3, verses 1 to 9, we've been looking at, over the last two weeks, Paul's proving of the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. And in verses 1 to 5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith is what brought into your lives this work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6 to 9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. And he says, "Just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham." And then he explains how it was that Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is, if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

And now, in verses 10 to 14, he shows them that the pathway of the law—meaning, if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law—he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses, from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10 to 14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages, all within just a space of three verses, to once again bolster his

argument from the word of God, so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing, in verse number 10 to 14, the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning, with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to one of God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but God's face is against them. What that means is, man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from

Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that the men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," and whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus chapter 20, verse 2-3 says, "I am the Lord which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And then He says to them, 'You shall have no other gods before me.'" What is God saying? He says, "You are in covenant relationship to me, not because you don't have any other gods before me, not because of these things. You're in covenant relationship to me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of my love. I set my love upon you, and I chose you for myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live among you, and you're going to have my presence there, and all that is, if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan, said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the 12 tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings and cursings. And in Deuteronomy chapter 27 and chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' Cursed is he that goes into another God or commits fornication. And all the people shall say, 'Amen,' and 'Amen.'" And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God.

And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against Me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience My presence, and you will be moved out from—you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer.

And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of Scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship or covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number

10 with me in Galatians chapter 3. He begins by these words, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight.

And Paul says, if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." And what Paul says here, "Okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His Son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going to make you accepted in the sight of God."

And Paul says, "Okay, understand this, that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse." Why? "Because the Bible says, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue,' and listen to these words, 'in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.'" You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him? He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God. And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience."

And he says, "If you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you." Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" I love it. He quotes Habakkuk chapter number two, verse four, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says, "The law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. The

just have always lived by faith. 'For by grace you have been saved through faith,' is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says, even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law, would say, "The just shall live by faith."

Why? "Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law. Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and in contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation." And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise, meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification.

Paul says in chapter three, verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one Lamb of God that would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins.

And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it." Reason number three, and final reason here in verse number 12, why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus chapter 18, verse five. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is, the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in You, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore receive me in Your sight," Paul says, "No, the law is not of faith." And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God.

And what he's simply saying is, there is judgment that will come upon

you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, there in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please; it doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."

And Paul says, "This is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed." You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies, therefore, to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His Son. And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law, where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice." Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come.

And so he's saying, if you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation. And Paul's saying, of course, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Who would want to live under such a way?"

John chapter 3, verse 36: "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God. You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In Scripture, when you see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately, that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say, "What you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse." But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says, "Christ is God's Redeemer."

You see, all those commandments that you could not keep, and so therefore, you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see, all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin? He says, "There is a Redeemer for such of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unfulfilling covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel."

And he points the believers here to a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says, perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all the Scripture, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse. He is both lawgiver and judge who applies the curses." You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says, "by becoming a curse for us." Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here, he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy chapter 21, verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now, what happens in our minds, we start thinking, "Oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died." It's more than this. It's more than this. You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker, and the full weight of the law has been been been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is the—this is how they—they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now, Christ became a curse for us. And He hung on a tree. Well, He

didn't break the law. And wait on a minute, wait a minute. You saying that God judged Him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking Him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law, the curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on His Son for our redemption.

He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us. Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge My Son for His people."

As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law. And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works.

God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His Son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us. And that's why it is probably said in Scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is My beloved Son, My Son of My love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross, crying out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment.

And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, O God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit, that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this, O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

Let me ask you this this morning: How is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience.

And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wres-

tle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful, and I'm obedient, and I'm good, and I'm righteous, and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past, and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now, get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you."

Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to My commandments, but because I love them. And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of Scripture that there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus?

All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "My sin, Galatians Chapter 3:10-14 reads:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Galatians 3:1-9, which we've been looking at over the last two weeks, Paul is proving the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. In verses 1-5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith brought into their lives the work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6-9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. He says, just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham. And then he explains how Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

Now, in verses 10-14, he shows them that the pathway of the law, meaning if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law, he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10-14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages all within just a space of three verses to once again bolster his argument from the word of God so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing in verse number 10 to 14 the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of a covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in a relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but God's face is against them. What that means is man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in a relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed

the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," and whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus chapter 20 verse 2-3 says, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." What is God saying? He says, "You are in a covenant relationship to Me, not because you don't have any other gods before Me, not because of these things. You're in a covenant relationship to Me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of My love. I set My love upon you, and I chose you for Myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live

among you, and you're going to have My presence there, and all that is if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan, said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the 12 tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings and cursings. And in Deuteronomy chapter 27 and chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' Cursed is he that goes into another God or commits fornication. And all the people shall say, 'Amen,' and 'Amen.' And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God. And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against Me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience My presence, and you will be moved out from—you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer.

And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of Scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship or covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number 10 with me in Galatians chapter 3. He begins by these words, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing

Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight.

And Paul says if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." And what Paul says here, okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience, you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His Son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going to make you accepted in the sight of God.

And Paul says, okay, understand this, that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse. Why? Because the Bible says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue," and listen to these words, "in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him. He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God."

And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience. And he says, "If you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you."

Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" I love it. He quotes Habakkuk chapter number two verse four, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says the law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. "The just have always lived by faith." "For by grace you have been saved through faith," is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, "Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law,

would say, 'the just shall live by faith.'" Why? Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law. Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and in contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation.

And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise. Meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification. Paul says in chapter three verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one Lamb of God that would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins.

And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it." Reason number three, and final reason here in verse number 12, why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus chapter 18 verse five. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in You, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore receive me in Your sight," Paul says no, the law is not of faith. And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God.

And what he's simply saying is there is judgment that will come upon you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please; it doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your

relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And Paul says this is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed.

You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies therefore to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His Son. And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law, where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice." Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come.

And so he's saying if you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation. And Paul's saying, of course, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Who would want to live under such a way? John chapter 3 verse 36, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God.

You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In Scripture, when you see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say what you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse. But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says Christ is God's Redeemer.

You see, all those commandments that you could not keep, and so therefore you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see, all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin. He says there is a Redeemer for such of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unfailing covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

And he points the believers here to a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says, perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all the Scripture, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse." He is both lawgiver and judge who applies the curses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says by becoming a curse for us. Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now, what happens in our minds, we start thinking, oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died. It's more than this. It's more than this. You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker, and the full weight of the law has been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is how they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now, Christ became a curse for us. And He hung on a tree. Well, He didn't break the law. And wait a minute. You're saying that God judged Him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking Him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law, the curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on His Son for our redemption.

He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us.

Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge My Son for His people."

As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law.

And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works. God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His Son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us.

And that's why it is probably said in Scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is My beloved Son, My Son of My love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross crying out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken Me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment. And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, O God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit, that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross. "What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this, O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?"

Let me ask you this this morning: how is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience.

And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wrestle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful and I'm obedient and I'm good and I'm righteous and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work

and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "but the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you."

Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to my commandments, but because I love them. And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of Scripture that there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus?

All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "My sin, Galatians Chapter 3, verses 10 through 14 reads:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that

we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Galatians 3:1-9, which we've been looking at for the last two weeks, Paul is proving the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. In verses 1-5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith brought into their lives the work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6-9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. He says, just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham. And then he explains how Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

Now, in verses 10-14, he shows them that the pathway of the law, meaning if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law, he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10-14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages all within just a space of three verses to once again bolster his argument from the word of God so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing in verse number 10 to 14 the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of a covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in a relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but God's face is against them. What that means is man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in a relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God

as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," or whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus chapter 20, verse 2-3 says, "I am the Lord which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And then He says to them, 'You shall have no other gods before me.'" What is God saying? He says, "You are in a covenant relationship to me, not because you don't have any other gods before me, not because of these things. You're in a covenant relationship to me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of my love. I set my love upon you, and I chose you for myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live among you, and you're going to have my presence there, and all that is if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan,

said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the 12 tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings and cursings. And in Deuteronomy chapter 27 and chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' Cursed is he that goes into another God or commits fornication. And all the people shall say, 'Amen,' and 'Amen.' And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God. And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against Me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience My presence, and you will be moved out from—you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer.

And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of Scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number 10 with me in Galatians chapter 3. He begins by these words: "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight.

And Paul says if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under

a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And what Paul says here, okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience, you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His Son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going to make you accepted in the sight of God.

And Paul says, okay, understand this, that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse. Why? Because the Bible says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue," and listen to these words, "in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him. He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God." And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience.

And he says, if you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you. Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" I love it. He quotes Habakkuk chapter number two, verse four, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says the law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. "The just have always lived by faith." "For by grace you have been saved through faith," is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law, would say, "The just shall live by faith." Why? Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law. Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and in contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation.

And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by

the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise. Meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification. Paul says in chapter three, verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one Lamb of God that would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins.

And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it." Reason number three and final reason here in verse number 12 why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus chapter 18, verse five. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in you, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore receive me in your sight," Paul says, "No, the law is not of faith." And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God.

And what he's simply saying is there is judgment that will come upon you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please; it doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."

And Paul says this is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed. You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies, therefore, to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His Son.

And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law, where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice." Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come. And so he's saying if you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation. And Paul's saying, of course, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Who would want to live under such a way?

John chapter 3, verse 36, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God.

You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In Scripture, when you see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately, that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say what you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse. But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says Christ is God's Redeemer.

You see, all those commandments that you could not keep, and so therefore you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see, all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin. He says there is a Redeemer for such

of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unfailing covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

And he points the believers here to a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all of Scripture, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse." He is both Lawgiver and Judge who applies the curses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says by becoming a curse for us. Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now, what happens in our minds, we start thinking, oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died. It's more than this. It's more than this.

You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker, and the full weight of the law has been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is how they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now, Christ became a curse for us. And He hung on a tree. Well, He didn't break the law. And wait a minute. You're saying that God judged Him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking Him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law, the curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on His Son for our redemption.

He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us. Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that

would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge My Son for His people."

As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law.

And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works. God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His Son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us.

And that's why it is probably said in Scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is My beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is My beloved Son, My Son of My love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross crying out, "My God, My God, why have You forsaken Me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken Me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment.

And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, O God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit,

that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross. "What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this, O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?"

Let me ask you this this morning: How is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience.

And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wrestle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful and I'm obedient and I'm good and I'm righteous and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them

and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past, and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now, get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you."

Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to my commandments, but because I love them. And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of Scripture that there is therefore now no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus?

All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "My sin, Galatians Chapter 3, verses 10 through 14, reads:

"For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'), that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us

understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In chapters 3, verses 1 to 9, we've been looking at, over the last two weeks, Paul's proving of the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. And in verses 1 to 5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith is what brought into your lives this work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6 to 9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. And he says, just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham. And then he explains how it was that Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

And now, in verses 10 to 14, he shows them that the pathway of the law, meaning if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law, he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses, from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10 to 14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages all within just a space of three verses to once again bolster his argument from the word of God so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing in verse number 10 to 14 the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning

with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to one of God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but God's face is against them. What that means is man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that the men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very

beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," and whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus chapter 20, verse 2-3 says, "I am the Lord which brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. And then He says to them, 'You shall have no other gods before me.'" What is God saying? He says, "You are in covenant relationship to me, not because you don't have any other gods before me, not because of these things. You're in covenant relationship to me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of my love. I set my love upon you, and I chose you for myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live among you, and you're going to have my presence there, and all that is if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan, said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the 12 tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings

and cursings. And in Deuteronomy chapter 27 and chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say Amen. Cursed is he that goes into another God or commits fornication. And all the people shall say Amen and Amen." And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God. And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience my presence, and you will be moved out from; you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer. And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number 10 with me in Galatians chapter 3. He begins by these words, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight. And Paul says if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And what Paul says here, okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience, you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going

to make you accepted in the sight of God. And Paul says, okay, understand this, that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse. Why? Because the Bible says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue," and listen to these words, "in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him. He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God." And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience. And he says if you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you.

Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.'" I love it. He quotes Habakkuk chapter number two, verse four, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says the law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. "The just have always lived by faith." "For by grace you have been saved through faith" is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, "Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law, would say 'the just shall live by faith.'" Why? Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law. Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and in contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation. And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise. Meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification. Paul says in chapter three, verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one lamb of God that

would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins. And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it."

Reason number three and final reason here in verse number 12 why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus chapter 18, verse five. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in you, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore receive me in your sight," Paul says no, the law is not of faith. And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God. And what he's simply saying is there is judgment that will come upon you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, there in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please. It doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And Paul says this is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed. You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies, therefore, to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His son. And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice."

Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come. And so he's saying if you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation. And Paul's saying, of course, "O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?" Who would want to live under such a way?

John chapter 3, verse 36, " He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God. You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In scripture, when you see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say what you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse. But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says Christ is God's redeemer. You see, all those commandments that you could not keep and so therefore you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see, all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin. He says there is a redeemer for such of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unending covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel. And he points the believers here to a redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all the scripture. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse." He is both lawgiver and judge who applies the curses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says by becoming a curse for us. Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now what happens

in our minds, we start thinking, oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died. It's more than this. It's more than this. You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker and the full weight of the law has been been been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is the this is how they they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now Christ became a curse for us. And he hung on a tree. Well, he didn't break the law. And wait on a minute, wait a minute. You saying that God judged him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law. The curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on his son for our redemption. He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us. Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge my son for His people." As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law. And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works. God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us.

And that's why it is probably said in scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is my beloved Son

in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is my beloved Son, my Son of my love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross crying out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment. And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, oh God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit, that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross. "What wondrous love is this, oh my soul, oh my soul? What wondrous love is this, oh my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?"

Let me ask you this this morning: how is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the

children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience. And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wrestle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful and I'm obedient and I'm good and I'm righteous and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "But the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you." Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to my commandments, but because I love them.

And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means

that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of scripture that there is therefore no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus? All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.

"My sin— Galatians Chapter 3:10-14 reads, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them.' But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the just shall live by faith.' Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.' Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree'—that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us, that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In Galatians 3:1-9, which we've been looking at over the last two weeks, Paul is proving the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. In verses 1-5, he establishes from their experience that the experience of faith brought into their lives this work of the Spirit, and is therefore saying to them, "Look at your experience here. Can't you see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit in your life has come to you not by the works of the law but rather the hearing of faith?"

And then, in verses 6-9, he shows them something more concrete than their experience, and he gives to them the Scripture. He reminds them that their assurance of faith comes ultimately from the authority of Scripture. He says, "Just as you have experienced God's blessing, it was just the same as Abraham." Then he explains how Abraham was justified before God by faith alone in God, and that he was blessed. And therefore, whether or not you feel blessed or not, the fact is, if you believe with Abraham, you are blessed by God and are justified by Him.

Now, in verses 10-14, he shows them that the pathway of the law—meaning, if you reject the hearing of faith as the way of justification and you rather rely on the works of the law—he shows them this is exactly what it will inevitably lead to, and that is the curse of the law.

Now, what is amazing is that in these few verses, from verses 6 to verse 14, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point. And in verses 10-14, the text we look at this morning, he quotes three Old Testament passages all within just a space of three verses to once again bolster his argument from the word of God, so that they would understand that the very Scriptures that they are twisting in order to justify their false gospel, Paul is showing that it's quite the opposite. Those very Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Now, Paul does this by showing in verse number 10 to 14 the relationship between the law and cursing. Now, what is interesting about the law and cursing is that that is always presented to us, especially curses in the Bible, are always presented to us in the context of covenant relationship. And it's important to realize that curses are always a result of disobedience to God's commandments in Scripture. And therefore, the curses are equated to judgment from God.

Now, the way that the Bible presents this is basically showing that wherever you see a relationship in Scripture, you will find the law. At the beginning with Adam and Eve in the garden, God made a relationship with His creation, and He gave them one law: "Of all the trees of the garden you may freely eat, but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat of it, for in the day that you eat thereof you shall surely die." And Adam and Eve walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day, and they experienced the presence and fellowship of God. As long as they were obedient to the command, they would have God's face shine upon them, and they would know the blessing and privilege of being those that enjoy God's fellowship.

And the Bible presents to us the reality that all mankind is in a relationship to God. Now, for evangelicals, that sounds really strange because we always talk about salvation as a personal relationship with God, and that is very true. But the truth is that every man that exists is in a relationship to God in some form, meaning that God has obligations of His creatures. He has made them for Himself, and they have rejected Him. But this doesn't mean that God, therefore, is going to just do nothing to them, or that they are just going to go on as if anything is wrong. No, the relationship to God now is one of hostility. The relationship to one of God is one of judgment, one of condemnation, one that will result in their damnation. They are covenant breakers, and therefore, yes, their relationship to God is not as we know it positively, that they are in a healthy relationship with God, but God's face is against them. What that means is man cannot escape; God is what I mean by the fact that they are in a relationship to God.

In the case of Adam and Eve, before there ever was sin and before there

ever was the need of redemption, man was in a relationship to God of accountability. Mankind was under God and is under God. God blessed man, God caused His face to shine upon man, but with the breaking of the covenant came the curse. You see, God expected perfect obedience from Adam and Eve, and Adam and Eve broke God's law; they violated God's law; they, as it were, broke the fellowship and relationship that they had with God as a result of their disobedience to God's commandments. And God then declared curses that followed as a result of the fall. God cursed the ground, God cursed the serpent, and God also extended that curse to all of creation in such a way that the men and women themselves would experience the curse. That they were cursed by God ultimately because He said, "In the day you eat thereof, you shall surely die," and the greatest curse that has fallen among men is death. And God judged mankind, God set His face against mankind due to their sin. And man and woman were banished out of the garden, banished out of fellowship with God, and no longer did they enjoy the sweet communion and fellowship of having God as their God, and they as His people.

Now, God was not going to leave man in that condition, and at the very beginning, even in the case of Adam and Eve, God makes atonement for their sins to restore that which they broke. But ever since then, since the fall of man, God has established a relationship with mankind on the sole basis of His grace and mercy. You see, Adam and Eve sinned, and God didn't say to them, "If you want to get back with me and you want to make things right and have fellowship with me, you need to now not eat of all the fruit trees of the fruit of the garden outside of the garden," and whatever, or give them a whole nother set of laws and say, "Do this, and everything shall be fine." No, God said to them, "Here's a lamb slain for a covering for your shame." God, in grace, restored that which they broke, which was the very law of God. And the same is true with all God's covenant relationship with His people since the time of the fall, even so much as the old covenant with Moses.

We should understand the context in which that covenant was given. We all know the Ten Commandments very well, and we recite them, and we have remembered them, but many times we do not remember them in the context in which they were given. Exodus Chapter 20:2-3 says, "I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me." What is God saying? He says, "You are in a covenant relationship to Me, not because you don't have any other gods before Me, not because of these things. You're in a covenant relationship to Me because I redeemed you from the house of bondage, because I loved you." He says that later on, "I did not choose you out of all the families of the earth because you were great in number or special in that sense, but because of My love. I set My love upon

you, and I chose you for Myself." There was nothing good in Israel for God to be moved to choose them. There was nothing good in Adam and Eve for God to be moved to choose them and to redeem them. But out of God's own covenantal love and mercy, He established a relationship with sinners.

And in that relationship, God had expectations with the nation of Israel, particularly. If they were to experience God's covenantal presence, God said, "I'm going to live among you in the tabernacle, and I'm going to live among you, and you're going to have My presence there," and all that is, "if you want to experience the presence of God and know the presence of God," He says, "then you ought to live like this." But if you do not live like this, then what will come into your life is cursing. And you all remember the story, I'm sure, of when Moses was giving the law to the second time to the next generation of Israel before they came into the land of Canaan. And Moses said to them, right there at the brink, as it were, of the Jordan, said, "When you go into the land of Canaan, you will find the mountain called Mount Ebal and Mount Gerizim." And the twelve tribes of Israel, six of the tribes will stand on Mount Ebal, and six of the other tribes will stand on Mount Gerizim. And the Levites will proclaim with a loud voice blessings and cursings. And in Deuteronomy Chapter 27 and Chapter 28, they would pronounce blessings and cursings. And every time the curses were said, he said, "And all the people shall say, 'Amen.' Cursed is he that goes into another God or commits fornication. And all the people shall say, 'Amen,' and 'Amen.'" And then there were blessings for their obedience to God and curses for their disobedience to God. And what becomes really interesting is God says towards the end of those chapters is that you are going to rebel against Me. And I'm going to curse you, judge you. And you will not experience My presence, and you will be moved out from—you'll be scattered among the nations.

Now, what does this mean? You know, was God establishing a relationship with Israel so that they might rely on the law? No. What is important to realize is simply this: that in all the commandments that God gave to Israel, God knew that they would fail. So, God made provision for them in the very law itself. So that God gave them sacrifices. God made provision for them on the day of atonement and through the sacrificial system that they, through faith, might come to God and believe in God and trust in God and look to Him as Savior and God and as Redeemer.

And part of the children of Israel's disobedience was primarily that they stopped believing in the Lord their God. And the evidence of their unbelief was seen in the fact that they no longer submitted themselves to the law of God and no longer gave themselves in, gave the sacrificial offerings by faith in hope of God's redeeming mercy.

And Paul's argument in this text of Scripture is basically showing that God's covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we are relying on the law for that relationship. Look at verse number 10 with me in Galatians chapter 3. He begins by these words, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." And when he says, "for as many as are under the works of the law," what he simply means by that is those that are relying upon the law. He's contrasting it with Abraham. You are either those that are of faith and that you believe with believing Abraham, or you are those that are of the works of the law, meaning that you rely upon the works of the law for your justification, for God's acceptance of you in His sight.

And Paul says if you approach God in that way, you will be unsuccessful in the establishment of a relationship with God. Reason one, he says in verse number 10, "for as many as are of the works of the law are under a curse." For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all the things which are written in the book of the law to do them." And what Paul says here, "Okay, so you want to set the law up as what's going to establish your relationship with God, meaning that by your obedience you will be justified before God, that God will accept you not because He's a God of redeeming love and grace and mercy that forgives us in His Son, but you're thinking that there's something that you're going to do that's going to make you accepted in the sight of God."

And Paul says, "Okay, understand this, that if you take that pathway, you're under a curse." Why? Because the Bible says, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue—and listen to these words—in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them." You want to have that relationship that Adam and Eve had with God in the garden through that covenant of works, and you want to take the law and apply the law in such a way that you think that by its God will receive you back into His garden and in fellowship with Him. He says, "You understand this, that you are obliged to do every single one of those laws perfectly in order for you to know anything of the blessing of God."

And if you establish that kind of relationship with God, you are under the curse because the God that curses disobedience will curse you as you live in disobedience to His law. God requires perfect obedience. And he says, "If you want to establish this relationship with God, Judaizers, well, all you're going to have is a broken covenant relationship, and you're going to have a curse in your life, and God's face will be against you."

Chapter number two, why he says it's not going to be good for you to pursue a relationship with God built upon the law, is verse 11. He says, "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'the

just shall live by faith." I love it. He quotes Habakkuk chapter number two verse four, which was given at the time of the Mosaic covenant when the law was there. And he says the law was never given so that you might have life with God and fellowship with God and relationship with God. "The just have always lived by faith." "For by grace you have been saved through faith," is not a New Testament doctrine. It is a Bible doctrine that spans the entire testaments. And he says even Habakkuk knew that. He goes, "Abraham, yes, before the law, but even Habakkuk, in the midst of the law, would say, 'the just shall live by faith.'" Why? Because it is evident that no man is justified in the sight of God by the law. Rather, you come to God in repentance and in faith as the law exposes your sins. You come to God, even as an Israelite, in brokenness and humility and in contrite of heart, thanking God for His redemption through Egypt and through the sacrificial system, believing in God and trusting in His great salvation.

And what Paul is saying here is that no one has ever been justified by the works of the law, not Adam, not Abraham, not Moses. They all lived by faith. And he's simply saying that the law has always been a servant to the promise. Meaning that when God gave the law, He did not give it for justification. Paul says in chapter three verse 21, "If there had been a law which could have given life, then righteousness would have come by the law." But the law demands perfect obedience, and no one can keep the law perfectly. So what was the purpose of the law? It served the promise. It showed man the need for faith. It showed people the need for atoning sacrifice. It revealed sin, and it showed that we need God's promise for deliverance. It pointed to a freedom that would come ultimately through this one Lamb of God that would be slain forever, making atonement for sins. It pointed to freedom from sin and freedom from the curse. And so the law served the promise. It pointed to the promise. It prepared the people to receive Messiah as the promised one and to believe on Him who would cleanse them from their sins.

And Paul says, "What, you want to be justified by the law? You've missed it." Reason number three, and final reason here in verse number 12, why you should not pursue justification through the works of the law. Verse 12, "Yet the law is not of faith, but 'the man who does them shall live by them.'" And here he quotes Leviticus chapter 18 verse five. And he says, "The law is not of faith." And what he's simply saying is the law is incompatible with faith if you treat the law as a means of justification before God. If you want to do a juggling act and say, "God, I believe in You, yet look at all these good things that I've done, that I have kept this many laws this week, therefore receive me in Your sight," Paul says, "No, the law is not of faith." And once again, he gives another passage that "the man who does them shall live by them." Once again, you're obliged to the whole commandments if you want to live by them, especially as a means for justification before God.

And what he's simply saying is there is judgment that will come upon you for such. The law is not the basis for our relationship to God. As I said before, yes, there is no relationship apart from law, there in the sense that there are expectations in every relationship, but all relationship is established by reason of God's love and God's mercy and God's kindness. So Paul is not teaching antinomianism, meaning live as you please. It doesn't matter because God loves you. What he's simply saying to them is that your relationship to God is built upon nothing less than Jesus's blood and righteousness. And you dare not trust the sweetest frame, but you better wholly lean on Jesus' name. Because as soon as you start approaching God by works of the law, you will find that the curse of the law will be right there to condemn you and to meet you time and time again, pointing out your sin, pointing out God's judgment. And you will know the face of God not towards you but against you. And so it says in verse number 10 stands true even today, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse."

And Paul says this is the inevitable result of pursuing God by law works. You will be cursed. You know what that means? Anyone who does not believe in faith alone in Jesus Christ for salvation is under the curse of God. That means anyone who trusts in an iota of their own righteousness to satisfy the holiness of God is cursed by God. That the whole law applies, therefore, to them, and God looks at all the sins that they have committed, and they have no sacrifice for the remission of sins because they have rejected God's final sacrifice, the sacrifice of His Son.

And Paul is saying to the Judaizers, "You want to lead the Galatians on this path back to the law, where they can go all the way back to the law, have all those 613 commandments, but you know what they'll have? They'll have no sacrifice." Because all those lambs and goats could never take away sins. And it was only because they were looking to Jesus ultimately that they even had that forgiveness and experience of forgiveness because of the blood of the lamb that was to come. And so he's saying, "If you want to pursue this life of law works, you have no sacrifice. All you have is the judgment of God, your sin, and condemnation." And Paul's saying, "Of course, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Who would want to live under such a way?"

John Chapter 3:36, "He who believes in the Son has everlasting life, and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him." This is it. Man is under the wrath of God, is under the curse of God.

You see, the curses are not because they got some bad luck or some evil eye that came upon them. This is the judgment of God. In Scripture, when you

see cursing, what you find is that it is God that is judging people for their disobedience against Him. Sure, He has many means by which He may do that, but ultimately that is the purpose and reason behind the curses.

So how do we escape the curse? How does the world then find a way out of the curse? Well, some might say what you need to do then is go on and obey God. And therefore, you'll be free from the curse. But I love Paul's answer. What did he say to us here in verse number 13? "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." Having become a curse for us. He says Christ is God's Redeemer.

You see all those commandments that you could not keep, and so therefore you had to keep on making atoning sacrifices. You see all those laws that condemn you and show you your sin and point out your disobedience to God. You know that curse that is upon you because of God's face being turned away from you due to your sin. He says there is a Redeemer for such of those people that are under the curse. There is one who will come with promised hope and promised love and bring us into an unfailing covenant relationship with God forevermore. A covenant which cannot be broken. A covenant that is established on better promises and on better sacrifices that speaks better things than the blood of Abel.

And he points the believers here to a Redeemer, the Lord Jesus, and he says, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law." But how did Christ redeem us? And he says perhaps one of the most shocking statements in all the Scripture, "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which is God's curse." He is both Lawgiver and Judge who applies the curses. You can read that in Deuteronomy 27 to 29. But he says by becoming a curse for us. Whoa. Hang on a minute. Let me read that again. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us."

Paul says here he quotes a passage in Deuteronomy and says in Deuteronomy chapter 21 verse 23, but he quotes it here in verse number 13, "for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.'" Now what happens in our minds, we start thinking, oh, it's because there was the cross, that was the curse, that he died. It's more than this. It's more than this.

You see, in Israel, when someone violated the law, they were killed by stoning or whatever it may be. And after they were killed, they were hanged on a tree after they were killed. And what that would be was a public testimony to all people around that this person is a lawbreaker, and the full weight of the law has been been been fallen upon him. And he has received the judgment that is due to him. And therefore, this is a man cursed by God. Why? Because he disobeyed God. That was the whole thing. This is

the—this is how they—they applied capital punishment. And they would put them on the tree as hanging there to show that this is what happens when you break God's law. God's curse falls on you.

Now, Christ became a curse for us. And He hung on a tree. Well, He didn't break the law. And wait on a minute, wait a minute. You saying that God judged Him for us? If the curses of the judgment of God, it wasn't the soldiers that were mocking Him. It's not that kind of cursing that is being referred to. He's talking about the weight of the law. The curse of the law, the judgment of God falling on His Son for our redemption.

He became a curse for us, the full weight of the law that was against us. Every time you broke God's law, every time you lusted, every time you curse God's name, every time you do not trust Him, every time you had other gods before Him, every time that you bow down and worship another idol, every time you lived in disobedience to all the commandments of God, which we could go on and on and on and on about all that. And the cursing that would result on that because of God being against you for all the days of your life, past, present, and future. God said, "I'm going to take that all, and I'm going to judge My Son for His people."

As the hymn writer says, "In my place condemned He stood." Condemned by the law, condemned by the Father, but in my place. I should have been on the cross. The punishment of the law should have been against me. The curse of the law should be against me. I had sinned. He was innocent. What is God doing? He's redeeming us from the curse of the law. And what that means is God is doing something in Jesus Christ so that He might once again cause His face to shine upon us. That He might once again restore us to Eden, restore us into fellowship, that we might once again walk with Him in the cool of the day and know His loving kindness and presence and not have to build a relationship with Him according to law works.

God is doing something in Jesus Christ that will last forever, that will bring blessing to us forever. And what He is doing in His Son is that He is meeting out the full requirement of the law against Him for us. And that's why it is probably said in Scripture when Jesus cried out on the cross, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What happened? This Jesus that the Father looked upon and said, "This is My beloved Son in whom I am well pleased." This Jesus that He said, "This is My beloved Son, My Son of My love." And He says, "Hear Him," at the Mount of Transfiguration. Now Jesus is on the cross crying out, "My God, my God, why have You forsaken me?" What has happened? What is going on in that very moment? What is happening in that very moment is there was darkness upon the face of the earth as a witness to the fact that God was turning His face away from the Son as He was bearing our sins in His body, and the law meted against Him

on the cross. And the full weight of the wrath of God fell on Him, and He cried out, "Why have You forsaken me?" He was forsaken so that we would no longer be forsaken. He was stricken, smitten, and afflicted by God that we would not be that way, that God would spare us from judgment.

And the Bible teaches that it was the will of the Lord to bruise Him; it pleased the Lord to bruise Him. The Bible teaches us that God had put Him to grief. He put Him to grief for us. He did it for our redemption so that we no longer will be cursed by the law and have a relationship with God where God's face is turned against us, rather that our relationship to God might now be that He might forever smile upon us in the person of His Son.

Why did You do this, O God? Verse 14, "that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith." Isn't that beautiful? The promise of the Spirit, that is the promise of the covenant. God's presence in the tabernacle, in the temple, in the garden, now in His people, now among His people, the church, the promise of the Spirit through faith. Through faith in this one who bore our sins in His own body upon the cross.

What wondrous love is this, O my soul, O my soul? What wondrous love is this, O my soul? What wondrous love is this that caused the Lord of bliss to bear the dreadful curse for my soul, for my soul, to bear the dreadful curse for my soul?

Let me ask you this this morning: How is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? One of sin? One of alienation? One of rejection? One in which you continually approach God by works of the law, hoping that one day God might accept you and justify you because you've been good enough? Where is your reliance? Are you blessed with believing Abraham because you believe as Abraham, or you are here today trusting in your reliance upon what you're doing? Looking to your obedience, your meticulous ticking of every box in your life so that God is pleased with you? Are you relying on the law, or are you relying on works, or are you relying on Jesus Christ as your Savior and Lord and King?

You see, He became a curse for us so that we no longer would be cursed by the law and sin and death. And I think it is important for us to realize that there are many Christians that even struggle at this point, that they are very much like the children of Israel, or we can be very much like the children of Israel, where we taste of God's redeeming love when He pulls us out of Egypt, and we rejoice in His gracious salvation. But somewhere along the line, we start now approaching God by law works, thinking that it's because of the things that we do that God accepts us, and it's because of the things that we don't do or whatever it is that God rejects us or accepts

us. And we start measuring our relationship to God and our acceptance before God and our justification and our righteousness before God based upon our own deeds and based upon our own obedience.

And even though we have believed in Jesus and trusted in Jesus, we wrestle in our thought life with these very things. And you know what happens? We feel cursed. We feel God's against us. We feel like God's out to get us, that He's trying to destroy our lives. And that is because we're looking at our relationship with God through the works of the law and not through faith in Jesus Christ. It is because we will not say to ourselves, "Christ has redeemed me from the curse of the law, being made a curse for me." Rather, we think that God is blessing me because I'm faithful and I'm obedient and I'm good and I'm righteous and I'm just, as opposed to knowing that God only blesses you because you know His Son, and He judges you in the work and person of His Son.

Others feel like they're cursed by God and that God is out to get them and punish them for past sins. A lot of talk these days about generational curses. You hear these things online and in various places where the thought is that, you know, I've had this done, this in my life, and this in the past, and therefore God's like getting me back. That God is, as it were, punishing me for the things that I have done in my past, and that I am bound to this perpetual cycle of defeat and this cycle of cursing and the cycle of sin and trouble because I can't ever shake those things in my life because of what's happened in my past, and God's against me.

The truth is the Bible teaches us that no one can curse that which God has blessed. Deuteronomy 23:5, it says this, "but the Lord your God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you." Listen to that. Balaam was going out to curse Israel, and the Bible says here that the Lord God would not listen to Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you. Now get the reason why He did this. This is very important because the verse ends by saying this, "because the Lord your God loved you."

Balaam ascended the mountain to curse, but instead, there was blessing, and God said the reason why there was blessing instead of cursing is not because Israel was so obedient to my commandments, but because I love them. And we think to ourselves that God is out to get us because of our disobedience and this and that. Do not you understand the blood of Jesus Christ that cleanses us from all sin? Do not you understand what it means that Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, which means the full weight of the law and its sin fell on Him instead of us? Do not you understand the text of Scripture that there is therefore no condemnation to those that are in Christ Jesus?

All this is possible because there is a Redeemer that God has sent to deal with the law and sin and the curse forevermore, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him. "My sin, TRANSCRIPT:

Galatians Chapter 3:10-14 tells us, "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse: for it is written, Cursed is every one that continueth not in all things which are written in the book of the law to do them. But that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, The just shall live by faith. And the law is not of faith: but, The man that doeth them shall live in them. Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us: for it is written, Cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree: That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ; that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith."

Brethren, let us approach the throne of grace. Lord, we come to You asking that You would send the Spirit to help us understand the great blessing that is ours in Christ Jesus the Lord, and to see this great Savior who became a curse for us that He might redeem us from the curse of the law. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

In the preceding verses of chapter 3, Paul has been proving the primacy of faith over the works of the law, particularly in regards to our justification. He establishes from the Galatians' experience that it was faith that brought the work of the Spirit into their lives. He implores them to consider their experience, to see that the blessing of the Holy Spirit came not by the works of the law but by the hearing of faith.

Paul then turns to Scripture, reminding them that their assurance of faith comes from the authority of Scripture. He parallels their experience with that of Abraham, who was justified before God by faith alone. Whether or not one feels blessed, the fact remains that if one believes with Abraham, one is blessed by God and justified by Him.

Now, Paul shows that the pathway of the law, if one rejects faith as the means of justification and relies on the works of the law, will inevitably lead to the curse of the law. In a few short verses, Paul quotes six Old Testament passages to prove his point, bolstering his argument from the word of God, showing that the Scriptures testify that a man is justified by faith alone and not by the works of the law.

Paul illustrates the relationship between the law and cursing, noting that curses in the Bible are presented in the context of a covenant relationship. Curses are the result of disobedience to God's commandments and are

equated to judgment from God. Wherever there is a relationship in Scripture, there is the law. With Adam and Eve, God established a relationship and gave them one law. As long as they were obedient, they would know the blessing and privilege of God's fellowship. But with the breaking of the covenant came the curse.

All mankind is in a relationship to God, whether in hostility or judgment, and is accountable to Him. God's expectations were perfect obedience, and with the violation of His law came curses and judgment. Yet, God did not leave man in this condition; He made atonement for Adam and Eve's sins to restore what was broken. Since the fall, God has established a relationship with mankind on the basis of His grace and mercy.

The old covenant with Moses was given in the context of redemption. God redeemed Israel from Egypt and established a covenant with them, not because of their obedience, but because of His love. The law was given so that if Israel wanted to experience God's presence, they would live according to His commandments. Disobedience would result in cursing.

Paul argues that a covenant relationship to God is always unsuccessful if we rely on the law for that relationship. He explains that those who rely on the works of the law for justification are under a curse because they are obligated to keep the entire law perfectly to know God's blessing. No one is justified by the law in the sight of God; the just have always lived by faith. The law served the promise, revealing sin and the need for atonement, pointing to the ultimate sacrifice of Jesus Christ for deliverance from sin and the curse.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us. He bore the full weight of the law's judgment for our sins, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. This redemption allows us to have a relationship with God not based on law works but on faith in Jesus Christ.

In conclusion, how is your relationship to God? Is it one of cursing or blessing? Are you relying on the law or on Jesus Christ for your salvation? Christ became a curse for us so that we might be blessed with the promise of the Spirit. Let us not approach God by works of the law but by faith in the redeeming work of Jesus Christ, who bore our sins and the curse of the law on our behalf. Let us praise Him for His mercy and grace, for He has made us righteous in Him. Amen.