

The Purpose of the Law

Galatians 3:19-25

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TRANSCRIPT:

Beloved, turn with me to Galatians Chapter 3, and we will read from verse 15 through verse 25. "Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: though it is only a man's covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, 'And to seeds,' as of many, but as of one, 'And to your Seed,' who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise. What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator. Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law. But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor."

Let us pray. Lord, we ask that You would open the eyes of our understanding to this passage of Scripture, and that You would minister to us by Your grace. As I speak, may I do so in a demonstration of the Spirit and of power, and as Your people listen, may they be filled with the Holy Spirit and understand and rejoice all the more in the treasures that are ours in Christ Jesus. Be with us, we ask; we pray in Jesus' name, Amen.

This morning, we will be looking at verses 19 through 25, and we will see the answer to the question that Paul himself poses in verse 19: "What purpose then does the law serve?" Remember, through Galatians 1 to chapter 3, we have seen Paul emphasize that the law has no saving power and that

God did not give it for the justification of sinners; rather, it serves to their condemnation. He is demonstrating that the gospel of grace is a gospel that contains no law in its promise. It is of promise, it is of grace, and it is not of the law. If you have the law as your gospel, it is no gospel at all. This was the trouble in the churches of Galatia. They had come to believe, or at least were beginning to be persuaded by another gospel, which was a gospel of works plus grace, or law plus grace. Paul says that's not how it works, and he's been hammering away at it. You could just imagine Paul preempting what the Judaizers might say, or the other Galatians might say, like, "Paul, you're smashing the law so badly, what's the purpose of it? You're saying that Abraham received a promise from God, and 430 years later the law came, and the law doesn't annul the promise or do away with the promise. Okay, but you're saying also it doesn't add to the promise. So then, what purpose is the law? Was it for nothing? Was it a mistake? Was it useless? What intention did God have for the law? What purpose did God bring the law in redemptive history? Why did God usher in the law? He gave the promise, but He also gave the law."

Paul tries to show that although in God's redemptive history, the way God has worked out His salvation in history, God has both used the law and the gospel. He's showing, however, that these, although they are two ingredients that God has brought into redemptive history, they serve the same end, but you have to understand how they work and go together. This is what Paul tries to show. As you know, any of you who have cooked before and have sought to follow a recipe, you know that ingredients without method are quite useless. You can have all the right ingredients before you on your kitchen bench, but without the method that shows you how those parts relate to one another, you just have to wing it, and you would probably come out with something entirely different to how someone who followed the method would come out with. A nice cake can become just some mushy, messed-up piece of art, if you want to congratulate yourself in some way, but it would not be servable to your guests, simply because you didn't understand the way in which the parts manage together or work together. It's the same with building materials without a plan. You can have all the materials laid out there, but if someone doesn't know what to do with them, it ain't going to build you a house; you're not going to understand the parts of those materials and how they work to the serving of the whole.

What was happening here in Galatia is that, yes, they knew the law, right? And yes, they heard about faith in Jesus Christ, but they didn't understand how these things would relate to one another in the way God was unfolding His plan of redemption throughout history. So they were conflating them, or they were mixing them, and there was a disaster. In fact, it was so disastrous that if anyone drank of that cup, they would be poisoned and die

because it told something else entirely than what God had designed for redemption throughout history.

Paul goes on to answer the question of verse 19, "For what purpose then does the law serve?" by showing that the law serves as our accuser, as our captor, and as our pedagogue or guardian. These are the three images that come through in Paul's passage here from verses 19 through 25. Let us look together at the law, beginning then as our accuser. In verse 19, it says, "What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions." It was added because of transgressions. Now, commentators differ as to what this means, but I think if you are consistent with the rest of Scripture, you would understand that the purpose of the law was not primarily to deal with transgressions—that's the purpose of the promise, that's the purpose of grace, that's the purpose of the new covenant—to deal with our hearts and the corruption of our nature. But rather, the law was to magnify transgressions, to show sin to be transgression.

Now, if you understand what transgression is, transgression literally means to overstep the mark or to cross a boundary, like trespassing, basically. You transgress a commandment when you cross the line. But if you don't know where the line is, you don't really know when or how you're crossing it, especially on matters that are specific and particular. And Paul seeks to show that the reason why God brought the law in is not necessarily to deal with transgressions, and although the law in some respect restrained people somewhat, we still see that they kept on sinning against the Lord and His law. But rather, its main objective was to magnify and reveal transgression so that sin might appear exceedingly sinful.

To enter Romans Chapter 3, I'm going to move very quickly through quoting a few passages here, but they're all going to be in the book of Romans. So if you want to have a look, you can. Romans 3:19-20: "Now we know that whatever the law says, it says to those who are under the law, that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." You get that? Every mouth stopped, and all the world guilty before God. "Therefore by the deeds of the law no flesh will be justified in His sight, for by the law is the knowledge of sin." Romans 4:15: "Because the law brings about wrath; for where there is no law, there is no transgression." So you understand that coming through there. Where there's no law, there is no transgression. The specific nature of transgression in relationship to sin is the crossing of the border or the mark which is set by the clear exposition of the law, clear statements of the law.

Romans 5:20: "Moreover the law entered that the offense might abound. But where sin abounded, grace abounded much more." Thank God for that conjunction that shows us the grace abounded much more where sin

abounded. But here we have it, the law entered in that the offense might abound. So there's a magnification of our sin. There is a greater realization of our sinfulness and our own corruption of our own nature. Go to Romans Chapter 7, final one, verses 7 to 8 and verse 13: "What shall we say then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! On the contrary, I would not have known sin except through the law. For I would not have known covetousness unless the law had said, 'You shall not covet.' But sin, taking opportunity by the commandment, produced in me all manner of evil desire." Verse 13: "Has then what is good become death to me? Certainly not! But sin, that it might appear sin, was producing death in me through what is good, so that sin through the commandment might become exceedingly sinful."

You see what's happening here. Paul is presenting the law as an accuser of the conscience of men, whereby those that come face to face with the law of God and are honest with its teaching and are honest as to how it represents the holiness of God, and are honest with their own state and with their own condition, they will come to the realization that their sins are many and that they are in deep trouble. And so the law works positively in the sense that it accuses the conscience of people. You know what it's like driving in back streets, but you haven't seen a speed sign for a while, and so you go 60 to 65, and you feel okay going in the back streets, maybe through here, 60, not too bad, 63, 62. But as soon as you come past that sign that says 50, 50 zone, you're like, "Oh man, I've just been speeding." Now, in one sense, you may have assumed that you were speeding; you might have pleaded a certain ignorance to your speeding and just kind of think, "Yeah, a little bit over, I'm not sure, I think I'm over." But as soon as you see the law right in front of you, there, 50, all of a sudden your conscience is struck, and you feel accused of that.

Now, I was driving in far north Queensland in a country town, and I was going 80, but the 80 changed to 50, and I did not know that it changed to 50. Now, because I drive slow—you can ask my wife—I didn't lose my license, thank God. However, I was pulled over by a police officer, and I genuinely thought to myself that he was just doing a random breath test or something or other because I didn't see the law. But as soon as he said, "Mate, this is a 50 zone; you're going 80 or 70 or whatever in a 50 zone," I said, "Hey mate, I didn't know," but as soon as he said that, the guilt hit me, and there was a sense of conviction. Yes, the law officer was convincing me of my sin or of my transgression of that particular command. So by the law came the knowledge of my sin; by the law came the knowledge of my violation that I had just passed the line that was set by the law officer. And so the law serves as that indisputable sign to the fact that we are guilty before a holy God.

This is the first use of the law, as Paul is showing it here in this passage:

it serves as our accuser. And then the law, Paul says in verses 22 and 23, serves as our captor. Not only does it accuse us, but it leads to our bondage. This is important because verses 22 to 23 read like this: "But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed." And listen to these words here: "kept under guard by the law," trapped in our sin because of our violations of the commandments, and the law serves as it were as our captor or as our prison guard and warden, standing there and watching us. We are trapped because it tells us of the laws of God, which we have no power to keep, and it then tells us of our sin, but in a way doesn't lay hold of the promise before us. It tells us of our sinfulness and our corruption.

Now, the word "kept under guard by the law" literally means imprisoned, as the ESV translates it, and the idea is that the law has imprisoned us, that we are in prison because we have violated the law, and we sense our bondage to our sin. And that means, with the law continually pointing out our sinfulness, we feel hemmed in; we feel as though we are in bondage; we sense our enslavement to our own corruption, to the fact that we violate God's law.

Now, why is this important? It's because in Chapter 4 of Galatians, verse 24, Paul says this: "These things are symbolic, for these are the two covenants: the one from Mount Sinai which gives birth to bondage, which is Hagar." And so there's a sense in which the law, pointing out our sinfulness without making clear manifest our redemption, is our captor and causes us to lead in a pathway of bondage. It corners us, as it gives us no place to run and hide; it traps us in the corner, shows us that we are without hope, it shows us that we are of most men miserable because we see our sin for what it is. The ignorance that blinds men's hearts and minds to the reality of their sinfulness and their condition—you know, they think that they are free and they can live how they want, but they do not realize that they cannot live how they want; they will live as their nature determines them to live because they are in bondage. And as soon as they come face to face with the law, they recognize their bondage, and as the law keeps speaking to them, they feel their bondage even more and realize they're trapped, and the law has hold of them as captor, as an accuser, and has held them in the corner.

Now, the Bible says in verse 22, not only that the law kept guard, but it looks—look at it says in verse 22 of this passage—"but the Scripture has confined all under sin." And I believe what Paul is saying here is the law, yes, has imprisoned men, has been a captor to men, but he says that the Scripture testifies to this also. I love that. What he's saying is that you can look through the Scripture, look through the Old Testament Scripture, and

you can find this very truth that the law has held men as captor. He says, "Follow the storyline of the Bible." At the very inception of the law and the inauguration of the law, when Moses came down from the mount with the two tablets in his hands, there was the breaking already of the first commandment and the second commandment, and the inauguration of the law led to 3,000 souls not saved, like the day of Pentecost, but killed. The law slew them as they came face to face with their sin; they were dealt with according to the law. And then what you find through Israel's long history is this perpetual violation of the law of God. You find that this incurred the wrath of God, that the curses fell upon them, and that they ended up being dispersed among the nations because they were rebellious. But God promised a new covenant whereby He would gather His disobedient people to Himself, making them obedient. Listen to the words of the new covenant: "I will cause them to walk in My ways." And as Paul says in Romans Chapter 8, "that although the law was weak through the flesh, God sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit. For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has made us free from the law of sin and death."

As John Bunyan says, "The law says this: run, run, the law demands or commands, but gives us neither feet nor hands. Far better news the gospel brings; it bids us fly and gives us wings." You see, the law makes demands, but it gives no power for the fulfillment of those demands. But the gospel comes as far better news because it tells us to fly, which is a tough thing to do, but it gives us wings. God gives us a new heart; He gives us a Spirit; He puts His law within our hearts, and He causes us to walk in His ways. The law in the Bible, in the New Testament, is marked by a certain failure, not because the law failed, but because of the hearts of the people. And Hebrews points that out, and Romans 8 points that out, that it was weak through the flesh. And so the law, not only is our accuser, it is also our captor, demonstrated by the Scripture of this perpetual bondage of the people of God until the promise of the new covenant would come and usher them into Messiah's kingdom.

Lastly, he says in verses 24 and 25 that the law was our pedagogue, or our tutor, or our schoolmaster, or our guardian. There is no real translation that captures this idea perfectly; each one picks up on a particular nuance of its meaning. But the law is our pedagogue. What is a pedagogue? Well, in the times of this writing of the epistle of Galatians, there were slaves appointed as children's protectors as they were going from the age of 6 to 16, roughly, or to adolescence. They would have a slave appointed as the child's protector. That slave would provide constant care and constant supervision and serve like a babysitter, always at the side of that child. And that slave, that guardian, was a disciplinarian, like a

police officer by the side of the child, making sure it doesn't get into any trouble, and it would execute discipline when the child went astray. So what would happen is the pictures that depicted this in archaeology have the disciplinarian or the schoolmaster or the guardian holding a cane or a rod, marked by a certain discipline. And so what would happen is this slave that was appointed to this child for a particular point of time would usher the child around wherever it went, to and from school and other places like that, and would execute discipline when the child was disobedient, constantly pointing out the child's failures and also its disobedience.

And Paul says that the law was our schoolmaster, the law was our tutor, our guardian, magnifying our transgressions, walking alongside God's people through the old covenant, through redemption history, pointing out their sin, pointing out their transgression, pointing out their violation, pointing out their guilt, pointing out their bondage. You've got to ask yourself, would this be the lot of God's people forever? Is this how God is going to deal with His people throughout all redemption and throughout all history? No, no, no, no. The point of the law was to serve in that capacity for the nation of Israel until the time that Messiah would come, until the time that the new covenant would arrive. And so Paul makes a point very clearly in this passage of Scripture that there is a temporary nature to the covenant of the law. Look what he says in verse 19—sorry, verse 24—notice these words. He talks about "until" in verse 24. It says in verse 25, "But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster." So in verse 23, "But before faith came, we were kept under the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed." See, "But before faith came," you see all these words of time within this passage of Scripture, showing that what was happening and the purposes of the law in redemptive history have come to an end in Christ, so that God's people would live now under the rule and power of a new covenant which speaks better things than that of Abel.

And so you see this "until," "but now," "no longer," "until," "now," "before." The law, before faith came, there was this. And so then we ask, what is the role of the pedagogue? What is the purpose of this? Well, verse 25 tells us. It says that the law, verse 24, was our pedagogue or our tutor or our guardian to bring us to Christ. Now you've got to ask yourself, what Paul asked in verse number 21, "Is the law then against the promises of God?" See the answer? No, certainly not. Well, how, Paul? If it's pointing at our sin and all these things, how is it not against the promises of God? Well, he says it's not against the promise of God because, in fact, it serves the promises of God because the promise of God is redemption through Jesus Christ our Lord. And we have no understanding of the depth of our need for redemption until that pedagogue, until that captor, until that law which accuses us, comes in right alongside us and points out our failings and faults. He says that's how it serves the promise; that's the order of things.

This is how the method fits in with the ingredients. What God was doing in redemptive history was that He was preparing a people for Messiah. He was preparing a people for the new covenant. He was preparing the people for the seed, for the offspring that was to come. And what the Judaizers were doing was saying, "Yeah, I know the offspring has come, and His name is Jesus Christ, but hey, we can't be done with this; surely this has to play a part in our redemption." And Paul says the only part it plays in your redemption is to reveal your sin and your need for the seed, and it serves a temporary purpose because look what he says in verse 25, "But after that faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor." There you go. After faith has come, the purpose of the law as our captor, as our accuser, as our pedagogue to lead us to Christ is done. You cannot bring it back into your life as a Christian without consideration to the new covenant.

I love what Martin Luther says about this: "God must therefore first take the sledgehammer of the law in His fists and smash the beast of self-righteousness and its brood of self-confidence, self-wisdom, self-righteousness, and self-help. When the conscience has been thoroughly frightened by the law, it welcomes the gospel of grace with its message of a Savior who came into the world not to break the bruised reed nor to quench the smoking flax but to preach glad tidings to the poor, to heal the brokenhearted, and to grant forgiveness of sins to all the captives. When the Lord drives you to the point of despair, let it drive you a little farther; let it drive you straight into the arms of Jesus, who says, 'Come unto me, all ye who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.' That is how the law serves the promise. It served the promise as a type and shadow of the things to come, serves as a promise to point out the sins of Israel and showing their constant failure under its commandment so they might cry out for help and mercy, and God might meet them with the blood of the new covenant whereby He will change them from inside out and put the Spirit within them. But not only was this the case in terms of redemptive history, in terms of the way God dealt with Israel in the bringing of Messiah, but this is also the case when it comes to all sinners personally. This law still serves sinners in this way; it shows us our sin, and it shows us of our need for a Savior. It shows us of our bondage, of our enslavement, and it makes sin appear to us more exceedingly sinful. And so although God was working out the purposes of the law in redemptive history, and after that faith is come, we are no longer under a schoolmaster, under the covenant of the law, yet the law serves sinners in the same way in that it still points out the sin of sinners and drives them to the Savior so that they might find redemption in Him.

I want to ask you this morning, have you been driven by the law into the hands of Jesus Christ our Lord? You see, I'm afraid for many people today, the concept of Christ is appealing to them from the standpoint that Christ is a good teacher, or that Christ may benefit our families, or that Christ

may benefit our society, in which Christ and Him crucified, believed among men, will do those things. But if you come to Christ on those grounds, you have no forgiveness of sins. It is the purpose of the law of God to reveal our sinfulness that we might be driven to Christ as our Savior from sin. Do you understand the difference? It's a major difference. Many come to Christ just so that they can have a better life, turn over a new leaf, but what Paul is saying to us in here, that it drives us to the arms of Jesus as a Savior for sin. And so the question that we have to ask ourselves this morning is, have we seen our sin as exceedingly sinful? Because there are many that may profess Christ this day, perhaps you sitting here this morning, that still feel that your own righteousness is sufficient to make you accepted in the sight of God. And yes, you may confess justification by faith alone with your mouth, but in your heart, you are holding on to your good deeds. You haven't seen sin as sin; you haven't seen yourself in bondage; you haven't had the law accuse you thoroughly enough to realize that I need this Jesus and His blood to cleanse me from all unrighteousness, to make the conscience clean, to open up the bars of the prison and set me free.

So many people are like the Pharisees that say, "We have not been enslaved to anybody." There are a lot of people today that would be happy to say, "We're not perfect," but would you admit that you are a slave to sin? Have you admitted and seen the fact that you are in bondage to sin? You see, we have a way in our generation of dressing up sin in all kinds of modern euphemisms. We call selfishness self-care. We talk about anxiety without making consideration to the fact that asking this question: am I trusting God or not trusting God? Do I believe God's promises or not? When the Bible says, "Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God, and the peace of God which passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus." How then do we understand that in light of our fears when the Lord says, "Fear not, for I am with you; be not afraid, for I am your God. I will strengthen you, yes, I will help you, yes, I will uphold you with the right hand of My righteousness"? How many people cloak their sin of anger in the language of bipolar or the cultural normalizations, and so there's marriages being destroyed, there are people being hurt, and it's not a matter of my responsibility for my sin, it all is labeled as sickness.

The beautiful thing about the law is that it calls sin sin, so that the transgression always results in the offense, so that yes, although we may battle with particular issues, yes, in regards even to our mental condition and mental health and all these things, we must never rearrange the language of the Scripture to make us feel justified as if we can continue on in disobedience to the law of God and the commandments of Christ and do destruction to those that are most dear to us because we are unwilling to come face to face with the reality of God's law and His truth. People talk

about divorce today as being between marriages. That sounds rather nice, doesn't it, as if it's normal just to jump between marriages? We have to ask yourself, was this a divorce that had any biblical reason or grounds for it, or is this something that is just the following of your own lust because your spouse is not the person that you wanted him or her to be? We talk about things like "love is love" as a way of undermining the reality and the severity of sodomy and homosexuality as referred to in the authority of Scripture. You see, what the Lord does, it strips away all our coverings for sin; it strips away all our cloak for sin and it helps us realize that the very things that I justify to myself are exposed before God, and I need a Savior for my sin, which cannot be found in the law but found in the promise through faith in Jesus Christ.

The way you minimize sin ultimately results in the minimization of the magnitude of the love of God in Christ. When we put euphemisms to sin—not saying we shouldn't be careful in our language, please don't misunderstand me—but in our own hearts, as we deal with our own sinful condition, as we continue to make excuses for why we do what we do, we will find that we would never run to Christ as we ought to run until we come face to face with the sharp sword of the law of God, and then come to Christ as that balm of Gilead that cleanses us and washes us clean.

Now, this should impact the way we as believers evangelize, shouldn't it? I'm not saying we have to adopt Ray Comfort's methodology, but this is essentially what it's based on. You have to go up with people and say ten questions, ten commandments, and whatever. That's a method; it's worked for many; it's not wrong. But the concept in Scripture is that people's offense before God must be made known to them, that they might flee to Christ for refuge and for salvation. So my gospel is a half gospel if it is not a gospel that contains the sinfulness of man's sin and the holiness of God, so that the concept of transgression is made clear, and that people flee to Christ for mercy. This is the importance in evangelism that we have to have to have to have to realize. We have to stand in the place of Jesus, in the sense that we give people no covering for their sin, no cloak for their sin, but the covering of the blood of Jesus Christ, who cleanses all from sin.

This is how Peter preached on the day of Pentecost. Yes, he didn't go through the Ten Commandments as Ray Comfort did—and I'm not having a go at Ray Comfort, I'm just saying this is how it is—but when Peter preached the law of God, you know what he said to the people there at Pentecost? "God has made this Jesus, whom you crucified, both Lord and Christ." You know what happens? The Bible says that they were cut to the heart. That would have been the most awkward part of the sermon. But listen to what follows: And they were cut to the heart, they cried out and said, "Men and brethren, what must we do?" And then Peter said, "Repent,

and be baptized every one of you in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ for the remission of your sins." See what he promised them? The promise of salvation, the promise of grace, the promise of mercy, coming through the sharp sword of the Lord, which is the law of God.

Do not be afraid to let the law wound sinners, because as Jesus said, "Those that are whole need not a physician, but those that are sick. For I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance." And so let us see to it as God's people that we are not afraid to stand upon the authority of Scripture as we proclaim the Word of God, and in our engagement in evangelism, to not be afraid to ask the questions that probe the hearts of sinners for proper examination with the light of God's law shining into their hearts.

Now, the question that begs in many of you theological-minded people here this morning that I have not yet addressed is, how then does the Old Testament commandments serve the believer in Jesus Christ today? I'll deal with it briefly, and this will lead to discussions following, I am sure, but I feel that I must be faithful to at least an exposition of this. If the law is our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith, but after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor, then does the law have no relevance for the believer? Should we shut our Old Testament? Should we just carry New Testament copies of the Scripture around because we are now believers in Jesus Christ, and it serves us without any purpose? Well, I say to you, that is a wrong understanding from this perspective.

I'll give two verses to begin. 2 Timothy 3:16: "All Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for correction, for reproof, for instruction in righteousness." So therefore, the "all Scripture" there includes the Old Testament law and commandments, which were fulfilled by Christ in His death and in His resurrection, by which Paul says in one respect here, we are no longer under the tutor. Alright, so then how does it serve us? Well, it reminds us, first and foremost, of God's holiness and of our sinfulness, but it doesn't end there; it leads us to the mercy in Christ because we as New Covenant believers read it in light of the cross. We stand this side of the cross, and as we look at the law of God, we see it through the eyes of the cross of Jesus Christ, and we interpret it Christologically. We interpret it in light of the fact that Messiah has come, that we are in His kingdom, and that we are not those that have come to Mount Sinai, where there were terrors and lightnings that came out from that thing, that the children of Israel couldn't approach the mountain, but rather we have come to Mount Zion, not Sinai, Zion, the city of the Living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly of the church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to the God, the judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a New Covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than

that of Abel. The blood of Abel cried out justice; the blood of Jesus cries out mercy. And we've come to Mount Zion, not to Mount Sinai, which genders to bondage.

And so it reminds us of God's holiness, but it reminds us of God's holiness and our sinfulness in light of God's mercy in Christ. But there is no believer that is free from the obligations to God's revealed will found in all His word. The law of Christ does not make the Old Testament irrelevant to us, but as I said, with true covenantal lenses, we interpret it and apply it, not legalistically, but as I said, Christologically, covenantally, where we understand redemptive history. And what I mean by that is simply this: that everything that God says is important and is valuable and needs to be regarded by all people who regard themselves as the people of God. Yet you understand where you stand in redemptive history. You stand on the side of fulfillment. You stand in the side of fulfillment in Christ Jesus. You look at the character of God in the Old Testament, and you apply the principles of the law as they are consistent with the fulfillment in Christ Jesus.

Paul does this everywhere. Well, he does this first of all by reinstating nine of the ten commandments in the New Testament. He mentions the Sabbath; he also talks about the Sabbath but talks about the Sabbath in terms of Christ being the substance of the Sabbath, and therefore he shows us that there's a sense of fulfillment in Christ Jesus. But then you might ask yourself, then what's the relevance of the Sabbath? Does it have any relevance to us? Well, in some respect, it does, does it not? Doesn't God demand His people to take time to worship Him? Doesn't God care about the worship of His people? But as to the particular stipulations of that commandment, they belong to those who belong to the covenant in which it was given, and therefore there can be disagreement, of course, about the days; otherwise, we should all be gathering on Saturday and worshiping the Lord on Saturday, and about the details about work and things like this. Is that really what is expected of God's people in the New Testament? And so believers work through this all quite difficult, difficult, of course, but they work through this, trying to understand the concept of fulfillment and of the law and how it relates. But Paul doesn't shy away from using all the law of God to teach us how we are to live. Remember what he says about supporting the ministers and paying the ministers? He says to them, "Don't you know what the law says? You shouldn't muzzle the ox that treads out the corn. And if God cares for the oxen, well, shouldn't you care for those that minister the Word of God to you?" This is the language that he uses. What is he doing? He's taking the law of God, extrapolating the principle of the law of God, interpreting it through new covenant lenses—okay, yes, I'm a bit of an ox, I understand—but the point is, he can give it through new covenant lenses and applies it to the church, so that we might understand how we are to handle God's character and holiness in all generations.

And it is important, then, for us not to close our Bibles to the Old Testament, neither to think that we are not under the law in the sense that we are lawless. No, but we are under the law of Christ, which is the very law that undergirded the Old Testament to the covenant people of God, which is to love the Lord your God with all your heart, soul, and mind, and your neighbor as yourself. And therefore, we should read the whole counsel of God, preach the whole counsel of God, and apply the whole counsel of God in our lives as it relates to how we stand here in redemptive history, so that we can say with the psalmist, "Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation day and night. Oh, that I delight in Your law," etc., etc.

Alright, let us bow for prayer.