

Galatians– Embracing Grace and Truth

Facilitated by Sister Patricia Weaver

 **828 7580 6094** ▶ **Thursday May 28, 2026**

Women of Excellence

Bible Study 7pm

Memory Verse

Galatians 3:28 (NLT)

²⁸ There is no longer Jew or Gentile, slave or free, male and female. For you are all one in Christ Jesus.

A Defense of Justification by Faith Continued

Galatians 3:10 - 14 (NLT)

¹⁰ But those who depend on the law to make them right with God are under his curse, for the Scriptures say, “Cursed is everyone who does not observe and obey all the commands that are written in God’s Book of the Law.” ¹¹ So it is clear that no one can be made right with God by trying to keep the law. For the Scriptures say, “It is through faith that a righteous person has life.” ¹² This way of faith is very different from the way of law, which says, “It is through obeying the law that a person has life.” ¹³ But Christ has rescued us from the curse pronounced by the law. When he was hung on the cross, he took upon himself the curse for our wrongdoing. For it is written in the Scriptures, “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.” ¹⁴ Through Christ Jesus, God has blessed the Gentiles with the same blessing he promised to Abraham, so that we who are believers might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith.

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POINT 2 - NEGATIVE PROOF FROM THE OLD TESTAMENT

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 abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them.” Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith.” However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.” (3:10–12) NASB95

The Judaizers also strongly advocated the necessity of keeping the Mosaic **Law** in order to be saved. But here again, simply the sequence of Old Testament events should have shown them the foolishness of that belief. Abraham not only was declared righteous about 14 years before he was commanded to be circumcised, but more than 500 years before God revealed His law to Moses at Sinai. Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, and countless other Hebrew believers lived and died long before the written law was given by God.

Just as the Judaizers and their Galatian victims should have known that justification is by faith and not circumcision, they should also have known it is not by **the Law**. Therefore,- after showing what faith *can* do, Paul now shows what works cannot do. As in verses 6–9, his argument is based on the Old Testament.

In his defense before King Agrippa in Caesarea, Paul states the scriptural foundation of all his preaching and teaching: “Having obtained help from God, I stand to this day testifying both to small and great, stating nothing but what the Prophets and Moses said was going to take place; that the Christ was to suffer, and that by reason of His resurrection from the dead He should be the first to proclaim light both to the Jewish people and to the Gentiles” (**Acts 26:22–23**).

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The ancient rabbis were so absolutely convinced that salvation could only be earned through keeping the law that they tried to prove God had somehow revealed His law even to the patriarchs and other saints who lived before Moses and that those people found favor with Him because they kept His law. Because they could not bring themselves to consider limiting the supremacy of the law, the rabbis sought instead to reconstruct history and the clear teaching of God's Word.

But Paul turns the tables on them again. "Don't you realize," he says, "that **as many as are of the works of the Law are under a curse?**" That question would have utterly perplexed the Judaizers, who would have responded "We know no such thing. How can you speak such foolishness?" "Have you forgotten Deuteronomy, the last book of **the Law?**" Paul asks, in effect; "**for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to perform them'** " (see Deut. 27:26). A curse is a divine judgment that brings the sentence of condemnation.

The apostle's emphasis in the quotation was on the requirement to **abide by all things**. In other words, the fact that those who trust in **the works of the Law** are obligated to keep **all things** in the law, without exception, places them inevitably **under a curse**, because no one had the ability to **abide** by everything the divine and perfect law of God demands. Paul confessed his inability to keep the law even as a devout Pharisee. He testified that "this commandment which was to result in life, proved to result in death for me" (**Rom. 7:10**). Even as a believer he said, "I myself with my mind am serving the law of God, but on the other, with my flesh the law of sin" (**Rom. 7:25**) If men proudly insist on living by the law, it will curse them, not save them, because they cannot possibly live up to it.

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The legalistic Jews had “a zeal for God, but not in accordance with knowledge. For not knowing about God’s righteousness, and seeking to establish their own, they did not subject themselves to the righteousness of God. For Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to everyone who believes” (Rom. 10:2–4). Consequently, they unintentionally placed themselves under God’s wrath rather than His blessing, because they *could not* live up to His law and they *would not* submit to His grace.

Paul reminds his readers again of more teaching concerning God’s way of justification: **Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident; for, “The righteous man shall live by faith,”** quoting this time from Habakkuk 2:4. The passage from Deuteronomy proves justification cannot be by **the Law**, and the passage from Habakkuk proves it must be **by faith**. The ways of law and faith are mutually exclusive. To live by law is to live by self-effort and leads inevitably to failure, condemnation, and death. To **live by faith** is to respond to God’s grace and leads to justification and eternal life.

Quoting another Old Testament text (Lev. 18:5), Paul again turns Scripture against the Judaizers by showing them that salvation by works and salvation by believing are mutually exclusive: **However, the Law is not of faith; on the contrary, “He who practices them shall live by them.”** God’s written law itself marks the danger of trying to live up to its standard, which is perfection. If you are relying on works of the law as your means of salvation, then you have to **live by them** perfectly.

Whether consulting the texts in Deuteronomy, Habakkuk, or Leviticus, the message is the same: perfection allows no exceptions, no failure of the smallest sort. To break the law in one place is to break it all, “for whoever keeps the whole

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law and yet stumbles in one point, he has become guilty of all” (**James 2:10**). No wonder the Holy Spirit inspired Paul to write that “by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in His sight” (**Rom. 3:20, KJV**).

A ship that is parked at a dock by a chain is only as secure as the weakest link in that chain. If a severe storm comes and causes even one link to break, the entire ship breaks away. So, it is for those who try to come to God by their own perfection. They will be lost and forever wrecked.

Discussion Questions

- 1. What is the curse mentioned in Galatians 3:10? Explain**
- 2. Can Christians be justified by works of the law? Explain**
- 3. What is the role of the law for believers today?**
- 4. What stands out to you in this section?**

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POINT 3 - POSITIVE HOPE IN JESUS CHRIST

Christ 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”—in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (3:13–14)

Turning again to the positive, Paul reminds the Jewish believers in Galatia of the fact that **Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having been a curse for us.**

Redeemed is a word commonly used of buying a slave’s freedom. **Christ** justifies those who believe in Him by buying them back from their slavery to sin. The price He paid was the only one high enough to redeem all of mankind, the “precious blood, as of a lamb unblemished and spotless, the blood of Christ” (**1 Pet. 1:19**).

The curse of the Law was the punishment demanded because no man could keep from violating its demands, but **Christ** took that curse upon Himself as a substitute for sinners and became **a curse for us** in His crucifixion, **for it is written (Deut. 21:23), “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree.”**

In ancient Judaism a criminal who was executed, usually by stoning, was then tied to a post, a type of **tree**, where his body would hang until sunset as a visible representation of rejection by God. It was not that a person became cursed by being hanged on a tree but that he was hanged on a tree because he was cursed. Jesus did not **become a curse** because He was crucified but was crucified because he was cursed in taking the full sin of the world upon Himself. “He Himself bore our sins in His body on the cross, that we might die to sin and

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live to righteousness; for by His wounds, you were healed” (**1 Pet. 2:24**; cf. Acts 5:30).

That truth was extremely hard for most Jews to accept, because they could not imagine the Messiah’s being cursed by God and having to hang on a tree. First Corinthians 12:3 suggests that “Jesus is accursed” was a common, demon-inspired saying among unbelieving Jews of that day. To them, Jesus’ crucifixion was final and absolute proof that He was not the promised Messiah.

But for those who trust in Him, the two words **for us** become the two most beautiful words in all of Scripture. Because God sent His Son to bear the penalty for man’s sin, every person who puts his trust in the crucified Savior has had the **curse** borne **for** him.

Jesus’ sacrifice was total and for all men, **in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith**. On man’s part, the curse is lifted by **faith**, which God, on His part and by grace, counts as righteousness on the believer’s behalf, and the river of blessing begins to flow as the rushing water of God’s grace engulfs the believer. Jesus Christ bore the **curse**, Paul affirms, to bring **the blessing of Abraham ... to the Gentiles**. Salvation was for the purpose of God’s blessing the world. All that God desired for and promised to Abraham of salvation and its benefits would spread to the nations. A coordinate purpose clause is added—**so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith** (cf. Acts 1:4–5; Eph. 1:13), who comes as the resident, indwelling Person to bless us with power.

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All of this blessing is **through faith**. Justifying **faith** involves, putting away all confidence in one's own merit and works. Like the Israelites who had Pharaoh's pursuing army behind them and the impassable Red Sea in front of them, the sinner must acknowledge his sinfulness and his total inability to save himself. When he sees God's justice pursuing him and God's judgment ahead of him, he realizes his helplessness in himself and realizes he has nowhere to turn but to God's mercy and grace.

Justifying **faith** also involves reliance on and submission to the Lord. When a sinner sees that he has no way to escape and no power in his own resources, he knows he must rely on God's provision and power. Finally, justifying **faith** involves appropriation, as the sinner gratefully receives the free gift of pardon Christ offers and submits to His authority.

Justifying **faith** does not have to be strong faith; it only has to be true faith. And true faith not only brings salvation to the believer but glory to the One who saves.

When a person receives Christ as Lord and Savior, he receives the promised **blessing** and the promised **Spirit**, which Paul describes in **Ephesians** as being "blessed ... with every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places in Christ" **(1:3)**. This blessing gives a testimony of praise to "the glory of His grace" **(1:6)**. God receives glory when His attributes are on display, and nowhere is His grace more evident than in the sending of His only Son to be crucified on man's behalf, the Sinless paying the debt of the sinful. Believers are "raised ... up with Him, and seated ... with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward [them] in Christ Jesus" **(2:6–7)**.

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Men are redeemed in order to exhibit God’s majestic being before all creation. His supreme purpose is to demonstrate His glorious grace against the backdrop of man’s sinfulness, lostness, and hopelessness. The very purpose of the church is to “stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy” and to praise “the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, ... [for His] glory, majesty, dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever” (**Jude 24–25**).

Discussion Questions

- 1. How can we overcome legalism in our faith?**
- 2. Which Old Testament passages are quoted in Galatians?**
- 3. What is something in this lesson that stood out to you and can be applied to your life?**

Closing Prayer