

LSB Galatians 3:10 - 14

6 Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, 7 so know that those who are of faith, those are sons of Abraham. 8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, proclaimed the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "All the nations will be blessed in you." 9 So then those who are of faith are blessed with Abraham, the believer. 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 abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them." 11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for "The righteous shall live by faith." 12 However, the Law is not of faith; rather, "He who does them shall live by them." 13 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"— 14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

In the Bible there are some great themes that run from Genesis to Revelation unbroken. And sometimes I think we get dulled by words that appear so often that we glaze over them without thinking of the full depth and ramifications.

One that comes to mind is Lord. Evangelicalism has long since stopped short of what that word requires. If there is a Lord, that requires, what? Slaves. Slaves. *Why do you call me Lord, Lord, but do not do what I say?* When is the last time it dawned on you that someone else owns you and has total authority over what you do?

So much so that James tells us; Jas. 4:

13 Come now, you who say, "Today or tomorrow we will go to such and such a city, and spend a year there and engage in business and make a profit." 14 Yet you do not know what your life will be like tomorrow. You are a vapor that appears for a little while and then vanishes away. 15 Instead, you ought to say, "If the Lord wills, we will live and also do this or

that." 16 But as it is, you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

Actually, we learn that He is Lord, whether we acknowledge it; or not. Some day we will answer for every single breath we inhaled and did not glorify Him with it.

But that's not the word I want to draw your attention to this morning. Another word that we find from the beginnings to the end is redeemer. Redemption, Redeemed.

It turns out that all peoples, all men are slaves to someone. Either to Satan if you are bound to his systems because of unforgiven sins, or to God if you have been purchased, ransomed, redeemed out of the curse of sin.

Do you see it there in vs. 13a *Christ redeemed us from the curse*

I want to spend some time in this passage this morning and perhaps re-think about redemption. I fear it is a word that our minds have glazed over and we don't give it the attention of the dire importance that it demands.

Have you noticed that your eyes do that. See without seeing. The other morning I was talking to my friend Tim and I asked him where he was at, and he said, we're painting the train. That train that the town owns and uses for some of it's events.

And though I've driven past it a thousand times in the last year, I had to ask him where it's at. Then to complicate the ridiculous, he said it's in a lot next to the VFW. And I thought, Oh, they must have moved it over to that lot between the Pizza place and the VFW for the parade.

Then he called me back and said, not the vfw, it's next to the Elks Lodge. Oh, OK. But that's how our eyes and minds work. We glaze over stuff that isn't important to us.

What could be more important than the Lordship of Jesus, or our

redemption from the universal curse. Almost nothing, but I know because I do it myself, that we have glazed over eyes and ears and minds.

Most people cannot see or understand because Satan has blinded the minds of unbelievers. I pray that isn't true of anyone here. So, let's consider the idea of redemption for our time this morning.

I cherry picked parts of this passage just two weeks ago for our Easter morning worship thoughts. But my hope is that we will have a double blessing by spending two mornings considering these life or death, heaven or hell truths this morning again.

Probably the first use of the term redeemer, and the oldest use is in the book of Job. Though it is included in the middle of the old testament with the poetic books, Job predates Moses, and perhaps even Abraham. This is a fascinating use of the idea of a redeemer. Job 19:25 - 29 Job says;

*25 As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives,
And at the last He will rise up over the dust of this world.*

*26 Even after my skin is destroyed,
Yet from my flesh I shall behold God,*

*27 Whom I myself shall behold,
And whom my eyes will see and not another.
My heart faints within me!*

*28 If you say, 'How shall we persecute him?'
'And the root of the matter is found in him?'*

(in other words, Job is suffering as a direct result of hidden sins, he's brought this upon himself)

*29 Then be afraid of the sword for yourselves,
For wrath brings the punishment of the sword,
So that you may know there is judgment."*

If Job deserved punishment, his friends, more so. Wrath, punishment,

sword, judgement, are what we deserve. Job understood that, and he also understood that someone outside of himself had redeemed him from the punishment that he was due. I know that my redeemer lives.

Redemption is purchase by full payment of someone else's debt. All sinned and thus redemption, payment by someone else is the only possible way for us to be blessed instead of judged and punished. Redemption, purchased from the curse of sin, into the blessings of God.

The oldest book in the Bible understands the universal curse of sin. It's obvious to any observer. We die. The death that God promised to Adam if he sinned, is universal. Argue all you want. You will die.

But Job understood redemption. He saw beyond his death that in his flesh, he would see God. He would behold God with eyes of flesh, after his current flesh had rotted. Also note who the redeemer is. God is the redeemer. God is both judge and redeemer. Both punisher and blesser.

Next let's consider the patriarch, Jacob, son of Isaac, son of Abraham. Listen to what the aged and wizened Jacob now named Israel says at the end of his life, as he blesses Joseph's 2 sons, Ephraim and Manasseh.

*15 And he blessed Joseph and said,
“May the God before whom my fathers Abraham and Isaac walked,
The God who has been my shepherd throughout my life to this day,
16 The angel who has redeemed me from all evil,
Bless these boys;
And may my name live on in them,
And the names of my fathers Abraham and Isaac;
And may they grow into a multitude in the midst of the earth.”* Gen. 48:15,16

Hmmm. Jacob sounds just like Job. God, who is the angel who has redeemed Israel from all evil is who Israel invokes to bless these 2 boys. God redeems and blesses from what. *The angel who has redeemed me from all evil*

God redeems His chosen elect from evil. From sin and death. From punishment that we are due. God purchases His elect from cursing to blessing.

This begins in the very immediate aftermath of the fall when God goes looking for Adam and Eve and they had covered their nakedness with fig leaves but God slew animals and made them coverings.

Blood was shed to cover them. And thus began redemption by sacrificial blood until the lamb of God would die, once for all time, to purchase lost sinners. Abel brings flesh and fat of animals and God receives his offering, but Cain brings produce from the cursed ground and God rejects it.

Redemption begins in Genesis, right at the beginning. God's intervention to purchase those who He has chosen, begins immediately. And throughout the Old Testament we find God referred to as rock and redeemer. Over and over.

Yahweh is the redeemer of Israel. The law of Moses was never meant to redeem anyone. The law shows us our fallenness and drives us into the arms of the only possible redeemer. The law doesn't curse us, but it shows us that we are cursed because of our sins.

Paul makes that clear in Romans chapter 2. *11 For there is no partiality with God. 12 For all who have sinned without the Law will also perish without the Law, and all who have sinned under the Law will be judged by the Law.*

The curse of sin and death is the same with or without the benefit of the law. The law is useful to show you your bankruptcy, but it has no power to redeem anyone, only to define your sin and sentence you with ultimate judgement.

Paul has brought these facts into this argument with the galatians because

they had fallen prey to judaizers who were teaching them gross error that in order to be saved, they would need to fully embrace Moses law. Salvation not by faith in a redeemer's gracious love and purchase, but by works of the law.

We looked at verses 6 through 9 last week so we will pick up the argument in vss. 10 - 14 of Gal. 3

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 abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them."

The key word in that judicial statement is the little word *of*. *As many as are OF the works of the law*. The word *of* designates what it is that you are trusting in for ultimate salvation.

It's identical to where Paul rebukes the Corinthians for being divided into groups. I am *of* Paul. I am *of* Appolos. I am *of* Peter. I am *of* Christ. The word *of* is the antecedent of the subject. You are part of a group. It identifies who you are aligned with. *As many as are OF the works of the law*

In this case the galatians who are *of* the works of the Law are aligned with these false teachers who have taught them heretically that the keeping of laws is necessary works to qualify you for salvation. You purchase your own redemption by good works. Embracing God's law that came through Moses. Salvation by self generated righteousness defined by keeping God's laws.

And Paul says, it doesn't qualify you for salvation, but it does accomplish what it always did, it puts you under a curse. That's all the law can accomplish for you as far as salvation is concerned. The law curses. Actually it doesn't even really do that. You were cursed with or without the law, but the law shows you your own cursed self as if in a mirror.

If it's the law that you're counting on to be saved. You're still cursed.
“Cursed is everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law, to do them.”

Actually we could shorten up that verse to simply say *“Cursed is everyone*
The second part of the verse simply defines sin, which is universal to all of Adam's seed. No one can abide by all things written in the book of the law to do them. All have sinned. All have come short of the glory of God.

Except one person. God's own Son. Jesus of Nazareth. Born of the virgin, Mary. He was tempted in all things, like we are, yet without sin. Only one person ever, who lived in this world, who never sinned.

Take note. Born of a virgin. Jesus is not son of Adam. He is Son of God. Therefore, according to that logic, is Jesus under the universal curse of sin? No. Not because of sin anyways. No curse can claim Jesus who never once sinned. Hold that thought.

11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”

God's acceptable plan of redemption and salvation is not based in law. Law can only show us we're bankrupts. But God's method of salvation is based on faith.

Notice the word justified. It's an accounting word. We could think of it in an accountants ledger as being equal. Without debt. In God's ledger we all have sin. We are in debt. How can we pay ourselves out of debt. Can law keeping balance the ledger.

No, because perfection is the requirement. So being perfect, even if we could, does nothing to repay the debt of sin. Perfection is breaking even. It has no power to repay any previous debt of sin. Do you see what I'm getting at from an accounting perspective.

If there is debt and no possibility to repay, we have a word for that. Bankruptcy. But even that isn't helpful. Because our laws are so lenient to bankrupts, there's practically no reason to not be a bankrupt.

In the old world there were debtor's prisons. It was a crime to spend someone else's money and not repay it. Tantamount to robbery. Taking what is not yours. And debtors who couldn't repay were sent to prisons.

The law cannot justify anyone. You started out with a debt. Keeping laws doesn't repay anything. Perfect law keeping, even if it was possible, only accomplishes adding nothing new to the indebtedness. It doesn't repay any previous liability. Rather hopeless as a system.

11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

Law keeping justifies no one, but that doesn't mean no one is ever justified. It only means there's nothing **we** can do, ourselves, to cause justification. We are helpless bankrupts in a debtors prison. No means to repay. Ever.

But God can justify by other means. God accomplishes our justification. God removes the debt by paying it in full. Life is restored where before there was only death.

How. Well we have this little phrase, lifted out of the old testament book of Habakkuk that Paul quotes. *"The righteous shall live by faith."* The old testament reference is Hab. 2:4

*"Behold, as for the proud one,
His soul is not right within him;
But the righteous will live by his faith."*

Could we boldly say that western civilization and the tail end of the massive wealth and freedom of our nations experience that we may be the final recipients of in the long drama of mankind teeters on those 6 words.

That argument actually does have some validity. It was this little phrase that Martin Luther could not shake from his mind as he struggled with his own failure and sin and could not rid himself of the terror of a Holy God who would judge him.

Until he came upon these words in his study of this book. The righteous will live by his faith. What did it mean? It means we can be justified, redeemed by a redeemer, outside ourselves. God Himself purchases us by paying the debt of sin, for us. He sent His only Son to die in our place, a substitutionary death, full payment for all of my sins.

Justification comes by faith in that finished work of Jesus, paying my debt in full. Faith in the same redeemer that Job and Jacob and Abraham and all of the old testament saints had discovered. Humility demands that I trust another's actions on my behalf.

Abraham believed God and it was accounted to him as righteousness. That same faith is still what causes new life today just as it did centuries ago.

11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for "The righteous shall live by faith."

Luther grasped the meaning and everything changed. The reformation began and from those hero's we got a second milestone, the english Bible, and then through a true christian work ethic, the most massive wealth and thriving the world has ever experienced.

Is it a stretch to trace the wealth of the American experience to those words in Galatians? I don't think it is. Is it frightening that our current culture cannot erase and bury that history fast enough, cannot cause it to skid to a stop soon enough. Undo everything God did. Cancel the thriving. Yes, not only frightening, but a great sadness to those of us who understand the foundations of that thriving.

Righteousness comes by faith in the effectual work, in my place, for my bankrupt account, of a redeemer. My debt is paid in full, and I am declared justified by my glorious redeemer who has paid my debt in full.

Now understand me. That righteousness is what we call positional truth. You will still catch me in sin and say, how can this fellow claim to be righteous? Justified?

My redeemer has paid my debt. All of it. Past, present, and future. My ledger in heaven is stamped; Justified. Paid in full. Righteous by way of a substitute righteousness. Christs perfection is allotted to my account.

Faith is simply my belief that that is true. The evidence that my faith rests on is the resurrection of my redeemer from the dead. I am purchased by and belong to the living Christ who bled and died in my place, to pay my debt. I believe that. *11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Paul here is arguing about two avenues, two opposing belief systems in order to be presented as righteous before a Holy God. How do we stand justified before a Holy God who demands a holiness equal to His perfection?

Will a self generated righteousness through doing our best to observe and keep all of the laws of God suffice? Or is a purchase outside ourselves, a payment for all sins and a substitutionary righteousness credited to our accounts the only possibility. One is by self works. The other is by faith in someone elses work, on your behalf.

One system appeals to our pride. Yes WE Can! The other system humbly accepts that in ourselves we are hopeless bankrupts who can never repay.

The answer is in verse 11. Faith not works. *11 Now that no one is justified by the Law before God is evident, for "The righteous shall live by faith."*

Paul actually argues the case by scripture. Paul brings the authority of the written word to argue for his answer. Righteousness by works that we perform, or righteousness by faith in someone else's redemptive purchase.

The scripture says; *But the righteous will live by his faith.* And then Paul takes the next logical conclusion.

12 However, the Law is not of faith; rather, “He who does them shall live by them.”

Two methods, two systems to gain life. One impossible. One possible. One is based in man's pride. One is based in humble receipt of another accomplishing what I could never achieve, for me.

Paul acknowledges that life, spiritual life, is the desired benefit of both systems. *The righteous shall **live** by faith. He who does them (the law) shall **live** by them.*

Two ways to an end result, in theory. Paul will work within your theory. God's way where a redeemer achieves perfection for you and gives it to you freely. This is a pride killer. In this system I must accept that I'm a hopeless bankrupt unable to ever repay my debt and accept the gift of a redeemer who pays my debt for me, in my place. In this system, God receives ALL of the glory of my redemption. **Or**, you do it yourself by keeping God's law perfectly. In theory.

OK, let's consider the self effort method of standing as righteous before God at the last judgement. Law. Start with this one. Deuteronomy 6:

4 “Hear, O Israel! Yahweh is our God, Yahweh is one! 5 You shall love Yahweh your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your might.

You shall love the Lord your God with every fiber of your being from your beginning breath to your final breath, ceaselessly, without interruption.

How're you doing with that?

He who does them shall live by them. How is that working out for you? Anybody who makes that claim, I'll accuse them of dual sins. Pride and lying.

The theory fails. All the law can do for you is curse you. It cannot bring life. “*He who **does** them shall live by them.*” Only failure. Only cursing comes via the law. No life. Only death, because sin dwells in us. We are born with a curse. That system fails because we are hopeless sinners. Born into a curse.

Only one viable avenue for life. A redeemer outside of ourselves must pay our debt for us.

13 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”—

The only possibility of relief in our bankrupt predicament is an outside redemption. Substitutionary redemption. Christ became cursed, in my place. And by faith His righteousness is accounted to my account.

I gave Him my curse. He gave me His righteousness. A holy God is fully satisfied with that transaction, and death could not hold onto Christ, He burst out of the grave on the third day, as He said, as scripture foretold. He was seen by many reliable witnesses, some of whom also witnessing His ascension back into heaven, back to the right hand of His Father where He is alive today.

Soon He's coming back to depose the ruler of this world and to crush all evil, all rebellion, and He will rule on this earth on David's throne, at Jerusalem, for a thousand years. We who have been purchased by His blood will rule with Him. We believe every word.

He became a curse for us, a curse in my stead, the ultimate curse of death

and separation from God, the Father, He took in my place at the cross. I developed that truth on Easter morning and commend that message to you if you weren't able to be here. It's recorded and available on our web pages.

14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we would receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

The blessing of Abraham. What was it? We looked at it last week. Gen 12

*1 And Yahweh said to Abram,
“Go forth from your land,
And from your kin
And from your father’s house,
To the land which I will show you;
2 And I will make you a great nation,
And I will bless you,
And make your name great;
And so you shall be a blessing;
3 And I will bless those who bless you,
And the one who curses you I will curse.
And in you all the families of the earth will be blessed.”*

That final blessing has been partially realized but the fullness of it is still future.

One man. Abram. A great nation. Israel. And from Israel a Redeemer. And in that redeemer blessing for all the families of the earth.

Pinch yourselves. Here we are. In Tonopah Nevada. Recipients of that promise. Blessed. But there's yet more to that promise.

The final phase of this promised blessing is the deposing of the ruler of this world, the end of sin and rebellion, Satan bound, and a thousand year thriving on this earth, with Christ on the throne, instead of Satan. Ultimate blessing.

And then a new heaven and a new earth. All of the blessings cascading out of this single promise to Abraham, who believed God. All of it was already complete in the mind of God when He spoke those words to Abram thousands of years ago.

A man, a seed, a nation, a promised redeemer, redemption available to all the families of the earth. Jesus is that redeemer!

Those who believe in His finished work of grace are purchased out of Satan's authority to reign, out of Satan's kingdom and brought by purchase, into Christ's authority to reign, the Kingdom, as it were, of God.

This morning, as we speak, Satan still reigns and rules in this world. Those who belong to Jesus have been purchased and separated out of his grasp. We belong to a new King. No longer under compulsion to obey our old evil task master. We belong to Jesus. We are under His kind rule.

28 "Come to Me, all who are weary and heavy-laden, and I will give you rest. 29 Take My yoke upon you and learn from Me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. 30 For My yoke is easy and My burden is light." Matt. 11:28 - 30

Some day, the kingdom of God, us included, will follow our King, out of heaven and He will crush and depose Satan as ruler of this world. He will retake this world that He rightfully owns. Evil will be eradicated and vanquished. Jesus will rule the nations.

That's the promise, from a single seed, from Abraham, so long ago. Right now we live by faith. Soon we will see Him, face to face. What glorious things our Redeemer has planned for our eyes to behold of His glory!

Hang in there.