

THE HIGH COST OF OUR REDEMPTION

Galatians 3:13-14

Intro: The Lord had done a mighty work in the Roman province of Galatia. Some of the cities in this area were Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe. You can read in Acts 14 about the ministry that Paul and Barnabas had in these places. At Lystra Paul was stoned, and many think that he was actually killed and raised again from the dead. But, in spite of all of the opposition, a great work was done, and churches were established.

However, the opposition continued from unbelieving Jews who did everything that they possibly could to get rid of the Gospel of the grace of God. The result was that within the churches of Galatia there were those who were swayed by the false teachers, and they turned away from a Gospel of grace to the doctrine of salvation by works. And the works which they taught were works in obedience to the Law of God.

In chapter 1 we in verse 6 that Paul was astounded by how quickly they had turned from the Gospel of the grace of God to “another gospel,” which he declared was not really the Gospel, but a perversion of the Gospel. (Read 1:6-7.)

And then in verses 8 and 9 Paul pronounced judgment upon those who would dare to proclaim *that other gospel*. (Read 1:8-9.)

The area of Galatia was populated mainly by Gentiles, but there were also Jews there, many of them. There was no doubt among the people that people needed help from God, but among those who professed to be Christians, there was a great difference as to how that salvation could be claimed. And that difference continues on down to the present hour both among Jews and Gentiles.

As I think most of us know, the controversy among the Galatian churches, and, in fact, among many of the young churches in the first century, was over just what the Gospel was. There were those who felt that it was necessary to keep the Law in order to be saved. And this was just a part of those who feel that salvation is our reward for doing good works of any kind. But the Gospel which the Apostle Paul preached was a Gospel of grace. And this is the true Gospel. Paul taught that salvation is not a reward for good things that we do, but it is a gift of God. Our sins are so great that no amount of good works could possibly atone for them. Man by nature is a slave to sin, and it takes far more than what we can do for

ourselves, and more than what anyone else can do for us, that if our relationship with God is dependent upon what we can do, then truly we all are in an utterly hopeless case. This Easter Season is supposedly a time when we remember the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ, but it has gotten far removed from that. Even Sunday has in the past been the day when we gather to worship the Lord because it was on that day that He was raised from the dead. But now Sunday has gotten to be like any other day of the week – a day when most people do what they want to do, but not a day when they give even a single thought to God.

And so I am thankful that today I have another opportunity to speak to you about the death of Christ and what His death really means. And I trust that the Lord will open all of our hearts to this wonderful message of the Gospel.

First of all, let me say just a word about the Law. And when I speak about the Law, I am speaking about the Law God gave to Moses, which most people are inclined to think about as just the ten commandments. But the Law included much more than the commandments although they were basic to all of the Law.

I. THE LAW.

There are many parts of the Bible we could turn to for the truth about the Law, but there is really no need to go beyond our Scripture reading for the morning.

In these first thirteen verses of Gal. 3 the Apostle Paul quoted from the OT six times: in verses 6, 8, 10, 11, 12, and 13.

Approximately 500 years before God gave the Law to Moses, it was said about Abraham (and you have the words in verse 6) that “Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” This verse, which is a quotation from Gen. 15:6, gives us the basic truth about salvation. It was not a reward that God gave to Abraham for good works that he did, nor for being a good person. Abraham was a sinner just like you and I are, but he believed the promise that God gave to him of a Savior, and so he was declared righteous before God.

But what about the Law?

Read Gal. 3:10. (Read.) The Law was not given to save the Jews; the Law was given to show that they were already under the judgment of God.

The Law showed people in those days that they could not perfectly do what God required of them, and so it showed them that they were under the curse of God. They had to recognize that if they were to be saved, they had to be saved by believing the promise of salvation which had been given to Abraham. To break the Law in even one point, meant that they were guilty of it all. So the Law was given to show the people their sin.

The Apostle Paul explained this to the Christians at Rome when he wrote the words that we find in Rom. 3:19-20:

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

A lot of people set their own rules for themselves, but the rules that we make for ourselves fall far short of what requires. God requires perfection. And none of us is perfect. So, from a human standpoint, we are in a hopeless situation. We all have to confess that we don't even live up to our own standards, and so we ought to realize that we could never live up to God's standard. Even if we started out with a perfect record, which none of us has, the first sin would wreck it all.

And so, if we know what the Bible teaches, we have to admit that we cannot be saved by our own works. *How then can we be saved?* In answering that question I want to take you word by word through verses 13 and 14 of Galatians 3. And the first word we come to is:

II. CHRIST.

Here the Apostle Paul was speaking about God's Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. And he is going to tell us that our only hope for salvation is in Christ.

"Christ" means *the Anointed One*. And it means that Christ, God's Son, was *anointed by God to come into this world for a very specific reason*. There was no man who ever lived who was capable of doing for us what Jesus Christ came to do. Abraham could not save us, because he was in the same trouble that you and I are. He couldn't even save himself. The same was true of Moses. He never saved anyone. Neither did he save himself. And you could go through the whole list of the great men and women in the Bible, and you would never find one person who could help us in our need. The Pope can't save you. Take any person you want to,

man or woman, in all of human history, and you will not find a single Savior. Every person who has ever lived has been under the curse of God. All are sinners and have come short of the glory of God.

Many people today are taken up with angels. But no angel can help us. Our only hope of salvation was that God would have mercy on us, and send someone who could save us. And He did just that when Jesus Christ was born of the virgin Mary, conceived by the Holy Spirit, and untouched with human sin. He was born without sin. He lived a perfect life and in every way manifested that He was not only a real human being, but that He was truly God the Son.

So the true message of salvation is about Christ. And don't ever let anyone ever convince you of anything else. God would never have sent His Son into the world if there were any possibility at all that we could save ourselves by anything that we could do. For Jesus Christ to come into the world meant that there was no possibility of salvation in any other way.

But now we need to ask,

III. WHAT DID HE DO?

And for the answer to this question we simply need to go on in the verse. And so we read, "Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the Law."

What is "the curse of the Law"?

In Rom. 6:23 the Apostle Paul said, "The wages of sin is death." And in 2 Thess. 1:9, 10 the same Apostle Paul said that those who "know not God, and that obey not the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ ... shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord, and from the glory of His power." There are only two ways we can go when we leave this life: one is to heaven; the other is to hell. To go to hell people don't have to do anything, but to be sure that you are going to heaven it is absolutely necessary that you are trusting Jesus Christ as your Savior. And you have to trust Him before you die because there will be no way that you can trust Him after you die.

Eternal judgment is the penalty for sin. It is "the curse of the Law." But the good news is that Christ has "redeemed us from the curse of the Law."

Rom 3:19-20

19 Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God.

20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

(KJV)

IV. HOW DID HE DO IT?

He was “made a curse for us.” What does this mean, and when did it happen?

It means that He took upon Himself the full penalty of what we would have had to suffer if we had to face God for our own sins. And when did He do this? He did it when He died upon the Cross.

This statement that He was “made a curse for us” reminds me of another verse that is very similar. You will find it in 2 Cor. 5:21. And this is what it tells us:

He made Him who knew no sin {to be} sin on our behalf, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him (NASB).

So the Lord Jesus was not only “made a curse for us,” for those of us who are saved, and for all who will ever be saved, but God made His Son “to be sin for us,” that we might be delivered from the terrible penalty which we all face unless Jesus Christ is our Savior.

So you can see why Paul was so disturbed by those false teachers who were telling people in the Galatian churches that they could save themselves by trying to obey the Law. As I have been saying, salvation is not a reward for good works that we do, nor for trying to be a good person. Salvation is a gift from God, given not because we deserve it, but because of God’s great love for us. When Jesus Christ died on the Cross, He was not dying as a martyr. He may have been that, but the main reason for His death was He was dying to pay for the sins of all of the people who will ever be saved. He died to save Abraham and Moses and David. He died to save Peter and James and John and Paul. And He died to save all of us who are saved today, and the message we can proclaim is that He will save all who come to Him through Jesus Christ. You can’t buy it with money. You can’t earn it with good works. You come to Christ as a guilty, lost, and hopeless sinner, putting your trust in Christ and His work on the Cross. That is the only way anyone can escape the eternal judgment of God.

I doubt if any person who has ever lived has completely understood what it means that Christ became a curse for us, or that He was made sin for us. What Christ had to suffer for the salvation of sinners, is really beyond our understanding. It was terrible beyond what words can describe. But we can thank God that we know that “Jesus paid it all,” as our hymn says. He left nothing for you and me to do. He even is “the Author and Finisher of our faith” by which we trust Him to save us.

It is in the OT that we learn, as Paul said at the end of verse 13, that “cursed is every one that hangeth on a tree.” These are the verses to which Paul was referring. You will find them in Deut. 21:22, 23:

22 And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death, and thou hang him on a tree:

23 His body shall not remain all night upon the tree, but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day; (for he that is hanged is accursed of God;) that thy land be not defiled, which the LORD thy God giveth thee for an inheritance.

The way people were usually put to death for their sins in OT times was by stoning, but then hung on a tree. Jesus Christ was nailed to a Cross, and it was there that He died – died as no one else has ever died.

V. WHAT DID HE ACCOMPLISH FOR US?

We have already learned that He “redeemed” us. Two ideas are in that word “redeemed”:

- 1) That the Lord Jesus Christ died *to rescue us from the penalty of our sins, to save us from “the curse of the Law.”*
- 2) That the Lord Jesus Christ died to purchase us for Himself, that we might live to please and glorify Him.

But Gal. 3:14 gives us two additional blessings.

A. “That the blessing of Abraham might come on the Gentiles through Jesus Christ” (Gal. 3:14a).

You see, there is only one way of salvation. One way of dividing the human race is into Jews and Gentiles. If you are not a Jew, then you are a Gentile, and if you are not a Gentile, then you are a Jew. You are either one or the other. But when it comes to salvation, it makes no difference whether you are a Jew or a Gentile. There is only one way of salvation. And there is only one way of salvation whether you lived before Christ, or after Christ. So the Apostle Paul went to Jews and Gentiles preaching the same Gospel, the same Savior. No one will be in heaven who has not

been saved by the work of Christ on the Cross.

But there is another blessing that we have now, and which every believer has. You get this blessing when you are saved. Notice how Paul expressed it in the last part of verse 14.

B. “That we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith” (Gal. 3:14b).

The Holy Spirit lives in every child of God. And what will this mean to us? Well, it will mean that we will be able to live an entirely different kind of a life. Listen to Rom. 8:3-4:

3 For what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh:

4 That the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.

And let me add to that one more verse from Galatians: Gal. 5:16: “This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh.”

You see, before we were saved we lived our lives “in the lusts of our flesh.” We were unable to please God with anything that we did. But that is changed for a Christian. When we really know the Lord we want to live lives that are pleasing to God, and by the power of the Holy Spirit who lives within us, we are able to live lives that are pleasing to Him. *And remember that all of the blessings of our salvation are traceable to the Cross of Christ.*

Concl: Let me add one further word as I close. It is this: We do not serve a dead Christ. He died, and He was buried. But very early on the first day of the week He was raised from the dead, never to die again. He had put away forever the sins of His people, and now He lives at the right hand of the Father where He intercedes for us, and where He awaits that day when He will come again to receive us and take us to heaven. Is He your Savior? Make sure that He is today!