

Intro: Baseball & then the Bible. Curse of Bambino... 2004. 2007. 2013

The Red Sox broke a curse that never really existed.

Trans: You may not realize that all people, apart from the grace of God are under a curse. Thankfully, God has made a provision for this curse to be removed forever.

Trans: This morning I want to introduce you to . . .

“The Curse of the Curse through the Cross of Christ”
Galatians 3:10-14

Context: Galatians 3:1-9 taught us to receive the Spirit by faith and continue the same way, by faith. Those verse end by telling us that the blessing of Abraham belongs to those who trust in Christ. Now, he is going to continue his argument by flipping it to focus primarily on the curse that results from our attempts to be justified by our own efforts.

Read 3:10-14

Trans: Here’s my first encouragement for you ...

I. Realize you are under a curse for not keeping the law (3:10-12)

For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.”

- If you rely on works of the law, you are under a curse. Let’s get clear on this heavy truth in verse 10.
- The phrase “works of the law” refers to “depending on our good deeds” or we could say trying to perform our way to God’s approval.
- But what does it mean to be cursed? I know it’s Halloween, but we are not talking about any kind of hocus pocus spell with a witch and her book of curses. This is *infinitely* more serious than that.
- To be cursed is to be under the weight of severe consequence. The curse of the law involved being resigned to the judgment and wrath of God.
- Now we understand the strength of Paul’s language in 1:8, when he said, “If anyone is preaching a gospel contrary to the one we preached to you, let him be accursed.” The accursed is someone who has fallen under the curse and heading for eternal judgment.

*Here are **Three Reasons Why...** you will be cursed if you rely on your good deeds:*

1) You must keep the law perfectly (10).

- a. Paul quotes Deuteronomy 27, which speaks of the blessings and curses associated with keeping or forsaking the covenant God established with Israel. Verses 15-26 of that chapter list twelve curses that detail particular sins like idolatry, dishonoring parents, perverting justice, and sexual sin.
- b. The last curse, found in v 26, provides a summary statement: “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law and do them.”
- c. Did you catch that? If you do not abide, remain with the confines, keep everything written in the law, you are under the curse.
- d. The law is designed to reveal our inadequacies and sin.
- e. *Pic: My kids love to get out the box of crayons & markers, grab their coloring books and produce their DaVincian works in our living room floor. Now we understand that coloring*

- books provide an outline of the picture, and it is the job of the artist to stay within those lines in order to produce the best results. To no one's surprise, my four year old, and most certainly our two year old.*
- f. *We're the newborn... we can't even hold the crayon. Straight up drool all over the place. We have not stayed in the lines!*
 - g. Small lapses are a big deal, bc they make us guilty. All of us are guilty because no one keeps the law flawlessly
 - h. Paul here assumes the universality of sin. Everyone on the planet fails to abide, remain, keep the whole law.
 - i. A failure to keep all the law requires places you under a curse, so it is not by works of the law that you can be made right with God. But we also see in verse 12.

2) The law itself teaches men are justified by faith (11).

- a. Verse 11. "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for "The righteous shall live by faith."
- b. Habakkuk 2:4: "The righteous shall live by faith."
- c. The people of Israel were commanded to trust during a time when it was particularly difficult to have faith in God and his plan. The Chaldeans, or Babylonians, were about to bring swift destruction throughout Israel.
- d. If you are relying on your good deeds to justify you, you are in big trouble, because it's always been by faith, which means you are under the curse.

3) Justification by law and faith are mutually exclusive (11-12).

- a. Verse 12 - But the law is not of faith, rather "The one who does them shall live by them."
- b. Here Paul quotes Leviticus 18:5. The reference to life here is not life in the scope of this world, but the life the results from being reunited to God, which is a now and forever kind of life. It is eternal life.
- c. So the law demands that we do something we could never do in order to gain eternal life. "The one who does them shall live by them."

I want you to grasp the radical distinctions between the law and the gospel.

Law vs. Gospel

- Martin Luther, in his Heidelberg Disputation, which was a debate held one year after he posted his "Ninety-Five Thesis," said this...
- **The law says, "Do this and it is never done." (Expound)**
- **The gospel says "Believe in this, and everything is already done." (Expound)**

That is why we can say . . .

- **The law requires more than we can give.**
- **The gospel gives us more than we deserve.**
- The law commands what faith in Christ's work in the gospel obtains.
- **The law says, "Do this, and live!"**
- **The gospel says, "Live! And do this."**
- There are two distinct answer to where life is found. Life through your performance. Life through his gracious work.
- All of this is the distinction we talk about between empty religion and the fullness of the biblical gospel.
- The law places us under a curse, and this should bring us a sense of helplessness and hopelessness.
- If we don't see our need, we will never receive the cure.

Pic: Embrace this. "cursed are the ones who can't abide by everything written in the law." Satan... cursed... law stops my mouth... SHANE SONG

Trans: What are we to do about it? Since we are helpless and hopeless, we must receive a remedy outside of ourselves.

II. Flee to the cross where Jesus ended the curse by becoming a curse for you (3:13-14).

Read 13-14.

- D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones was asked what he would wish to say if he had one opportunity on his dying bed. Here was his answer: "Flee to Christ, and escape the wrath to come."
- Jesus accomplished our redemption by becoming a curse for us.
- The language of redemption takes us back to the Book of Exodus, where God delivered his people from the bondage of slavery in Egypt.
- The word "redemption" refers to buying captives out of slavery by paying a price.
- The payment is called a ransom. Jesus said of himself, "**For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.**" (Mark 10:45)
- The payment is called a ransom. The process is redemption. The result is the restoration of our position to where they should belong.

And God accomplishes our redemption, through a tree!

- "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." When someone was executed in OT Israel, they were usually stoned and then the body was typically hung on a tree as a symbol of divine rejection.
- The language is startling, and it is designed to give us a jolt.
- It's not surprising then, that the cross was a stumbling block to both Jews & Gentiles. One historian says that when the apostles and early church leaders would preach Christ crucified, Jews would shout back derisively "Jesus is accursed!"
- Don't miss this: the Jews stumbled over Christ's death, viewing it as a curse from God. That is until, they came to understand that the curse he bore was not his own, the curse he bore was for them!
- This is true for us today... the cross will not make sense to you . . . [you might even view it as a form of "cosmic child abuse" as one heretic has said in our day,] until you realize the Jesus became a curse, died, so that you might be set free!
- Jesus took our curse as our substitute that we might be redeemed. In Christ, the curse has been lifted and reversed. [04' ain't got nothing on this.] Through the cross of Christ the curse has been cursed.
- And we receive the benefits of his work by faith. Trust in Jesus. Throw all of who you are on all of who he is.

Look back at *verse 14*.

- Faith not only apprehends redemption through the work of Christ on the cross, but faith also is the pathway to . . .

Experience the blessings of the cross (3:14)!

- The opposite of receiving a curse is to receive blessing. Why did Jesus become a curse for us, by giving his life for us on the tree? *so that* in him *the blessing of Abraham* might come to the Gentiles .
- If you hang around a church culture, you'll hear the word "blessed" tossed around a lot. That was a blessing. That song blessed me. I was really blessed by that. You are a blessing to me. Bless you, brother, sister.
- This is the essence of blessing: Blessings are whatever comes from God's gracious hands. Blessings are life giving and carry benevolent force. They provide the life God intends for us to experience.
- A blessing is a life-giving gift from the gracious hand of God that carries benevolent force and promotes human flourishing.
- Blessing = Life/Flourishing/Life as God intended.

So watch how this works: Jesus became a curse for us so that in him we might be blessed. We see this in countless ways in the gospel and a few of them stand out in this chapter. Let me give you a few of the ways Jesus took the curse so that we might receive the blessing.

His Curse. Our Blessing

The Curse of [our] Condemnation & The Blessing of Justification.

- To be condemned is to be declared guilty and sentenced to judgment.
- Justification, as you will remember, means to be declared righteous, accepted, under the favor of God.

The Curse of [our] Bondage & The Blessing of Freedom.

- He was our ransom so that we might be free. If you do not know that the gospel brings freedom, you do not understand the gospel.
- Here's the tragic irony: people view Christianity as restrictive.
- People approach the message of Jesus as if it brings the curse.
- God is not a cosmic killjoy (wc)... he is not trying to restrict us. He is trying to free us.

The Curse of [our] Death & The Blessing of Life.

- The Christian can literally taunt death. Paul, in 1 Corinthians 15:56 says, "Where death is your victory? Where death is your sting?"
- Just take the Gospel of John. The whole framework of the John's gospel is "believe and live." Three of the seven "I am" statements expound this: Jesus said: "I am the bread of life" (6:35) "I am the resurrection and the life." (11:25) "I am the way, the truth, and the life." (14:6)
- "The thief comes to steal, kill, and destroy. I have come that you may have life and have it abundantly." (10:10). Life is found in Christ.

The Curse of [our] Isolation & The Blessing of Relationship.

- This is why he shouted from the cross: "My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?"
- Jesus experienced isolation that we might be brought into community with him.
- Do you think God watches you with his arms crossed and a scowl on his face? Or do you see his arms wide open and hear him saying "Come in!"?
- Relationship is built on love or it is built on nothing! Access...
- Here is love. His love calls us to come. You come to me... with your failures, and I will give you my victory. You come to me with your brokenness, and I will give you healing. You come to me with your wearisome burdens, and I will lighten your load and give you rest. Give me your fear; here's my peace. I'll take all of your ugliness and give you my beauty
- Once again, we see in Galatians, God has given us himself! He has done so in Christ, and he has done so by his Holy Spirit. Look back at *verse 14*.
- I hope you realize that I have primarily shared the blessings of the Spirit's work (Regeneration, justification, ____), but let's not miss the greatest blessing of verse 14.

The Curse of [our] Sin & The Blessing of His Spirit

- To be cursed is to be devoid of the Spirit. To be blessed is to possess the Spirit.
- The greatest blessing of the promise to Abraham, the greatest gift God has ever given to his people throughout the ages and into ages eternal *is the gift of himself!*
- The refrain of the covenant is always: "I will be their God and they will be my people and I will dwell with them."
- Before he went to the cross, Jesus promised his disciples that another comforter, another encourager. (Which tells us a lot about the ministry of Jesus, by the way).
- The Spirit is God's empowering, comforting, guiding, sanctifying presence in us. God with us. If you are in Christ, then God dwells in you by his Spirit.
- And in him, we have all the blessing we will ever need. Is God enough for you?

This is what it means to be redeemed. It is know justification, and freedom, and life, and a relationship with God, and having the blessing of His Spirit. So today, would you?

The Point: Receive the blessing of God through the curse-destroying death of Christ. .

Conclusion:

- This is made available to you through the work of Christ. All you have to do is hear and believe.
- I want you to consider this: Your life is going to go down one of two paths. Will stand before God one day under his curse? Or will there be a trail of his blessing that marks your life??
- **“I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. Therefore choose life, that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him, for he is your life and length of days,” (Deuteronomy 30:19-20)**
- Christ has made a way for you. Choose life.