

Guest Preacher - Rev. George Macaskill

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Preacher: Rev. George Macaskill

[0 : 00] Let's turn in our Bibles to the passage, the chapter of God's Word, which we read. The epistle to the Galatians, chapter 3, and I'd like to concentrate, as God would help me, on verse 13.

Galatians, chapter 3, verse 13. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

For it is written, cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree. Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

The Galatian churches are the only churches recorded in Scripture where Paul does not thank God for.

Every epistle of Paul in the Bible, when he writes to a church, he begins by thanking God for that church.

[1 : 18] Except this church, or these churches that were in Galatia. Now imagine, Paul can thank God for the Corinthian church.

I often wonder, could I thank them? If they asked for, to come and join our denomination, I'd be pretty worried.

You know what went on in Corinth. Not just the divisions among them. There was someone who, there was some who didn't believe in the resurrection.

There was someone getting drunk at the Lord's table. There was incest going on.

And they weren't even humble about it. Paul can thank God for that church. But here he is, writing to the churches of Galatia.

[2 : 21] The only church he doesn't thank God for. Why? Why? What was their sin?

If he can thank God for all that's going on in Corinth, why can't he thank God for the Galatian churches? Why? Answer?

What was their sin? Trifling with the gospel. Putting in a plus. Saying it wasn't enough to believe in Christ.

You have to also do something else. Paul can't thank God for that church. Adding rules and regulations.

For the condition of being right with God. And getting to heaven. I suppose, you know, in a way, we could make this verse a verse that summarizes the whole teaching of the Bible.

[3 : 32] Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. That's another one. Here, Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.

You know, that's what Christians are saying when they come to the Lord's table. I was going to church for years and years and years before I realized that.

I thought they were saying something like, Oh, I'm changed now. I'm better than I used to be. Just ask them. Just ask them. Just look at them. They're still sinners.

Every Christian is still a sinner. So what's the difference? This is the difference. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse in our place for us instead of us.

That's the gospel. Don't add to it. Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and you are saved.

[4 : 39] full stop. Full stop. Period. So let's look at what our text is saying. The curse of the law.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. Understand this as well. Christ has not redeemed us from keeping the law.

He's redeemed us from the curse of the law. The law is still the proper way to live.

Christ came to fulfill the law in our place because we can't do it properly. We can never ever be good enough to get to heaven.

You cannot get to heaven by being good enough. You can only get to heaven by faith in Jesus Christ. Have you got that? Christ came to fulfill the law, not abrogate it.

[5 : 45] The law is still the proper way to live. But it's not the way to get to heaven.

Have you got that? So what is the law? The law is a system, the system of rule keeping as the way to forgiveness and heaven.

It's no longer possible to get to heaven by keeping the law as best as you can. That's no longer the way to heaven.

It is still the proper way to live. But you can't get to heaven by being good enough at keeping the commandments because you can't keep them perfectly.

And God is a perfect, absolute being. Being an absolute being, he can't accept the best that we can do if that's not absolute perfection.

[6 : 54] You see, the law demands that we keep the law up to God's standards, not to the best you can do. It's to be absolutely perfect.

Am I right? It's too late. We can't do it that way. We're not good enough. We're still to do it, but we can't reach the standard required.

It's to reach heaven's heights. Heaven's standards, not earthly standards. It's to penetrate to the inward parts of our heart.

The height is heaven. The depth is the inward parts of our heart. Our thoughts. Our intentions. It goes that deep, searching for perfection.

How wide is the law? There are a verse in James, and it says, whoso keeps the whole law of God and yet offend in one point, he's guilty of all.

[8 : 07] In other words, the system of rule keeping fails if you once, once, break the law of God at one point only.

That's hard, isn't it? But it's because God is an absolute perfect being, and he requires absolute perfection, and we can't do it.

And it's to be kept. The length of it is forever and ever. The theologians, they use three technical words to describe the nature of the law.

Number one, it's unrelaxable. What do they mean by that? They mean no mitigating factors. God is an absolute God.

I know it's not popular today, but we're trying to speak the truth. God is absolute. There's no mitigating factors. He requires absolute perfection, and we can't supply it.

[9 : 24] Second adjective, the loo for the law is unchangeable. God himself is an unchangeable being. Therefore, his law is unchangeable.

There's not the remotest prospect that God will change his mind about requiring moral perfection to his commandments.

nothing outside of God can change God. He's immutable. He's unchangeable. Nothing outside can influence him to change.

And nothing inside of him will ever change. That's the teaching of God. The law, unrelaxable, unchangeable.

And the third word they use is inalienable. And as far as I can make out, that simply means you can't get away from it. It's unavoidable.

[10 : 32] We are born under God's law. You see, some people say, oh, well, if that's what Christianity requires, I'm not going to be a Christian.

I'm a Hindu. I'm a Buddhist. It doesn't apply to me wrong. If you are a human being, you are under this law simply by being born.

It's inalienable. Can't get away from it. We're locked into that position. Well, that's the law.

But I'm talking about, or at least the Bible is talking about the curse of the law. Christians, they're being delivered from the curse of the law.

They're still required to keep it, but it's not the way to get right with God. But the curse is no longer on them. And what's the curse? The wrath we're taught in our catechisms, the wrath and curse of God, both in this life and in that which is to come, we are under it just by being born.

[11 : 56] we are liable to every temporal trouble in this world. An unlimited amount, unevenly distributed.

Serious. We're liable to any amount of trouble in this world. I always remember someone coming to me and saying, George, have I had my quota of bad luck?

I've lost my child at, I can't remember how many, eight weeks I think it was. He lost his child.

And then he lost his wife at 28 years of age. And then his oldest son had got in trouble with the police and he was demented and he just came to me and said, George, have I had my quota? Have I had my quota of bad luck? I had to tell him the truth. Sorry, Colin, I said, I don't know.
[13:10] Part of the curse is the uneven distribution of the curse. You see, if the whole human race, well, if we all got five percent curse or ten percent curse, well, we could measure it out all of only two, two percent to go for the rest of my life.

No, no, no. Part of the curse is unevenly distributed throughout society. That's why you get sometimes, oh, why is it only one family in the street that seems to get all the tragedies? That's part of the curse, the uneven distribution of it. That's the temporal aspect. There's also the eternal aspect, eternal misery in a lost eternity, a place prepared for devils, never prepared for human beings.

Who would think human beings who are offered a savior would land there? Hell is not prepared for human beings, prepared for the devil and his angels, but humans will go there if they despise the offer of forgiveness in Christ.

Add to that spiritual inability. You can explain all this to people. You can spell it all out in the most graphic details, and what do they do?

[14:51] Just shrug your shoulders and say, I'm not into religion. It's not my thing. Spiritual blindness and spiritual deadness.

That's the curse of the law. Not pleasant, is it? But it's real and it's true.

But it's not the end of the story. Christ has redeemed people from the curse of the law. and that's the gospel.

So, secondly, we're looking now at the redemption that there is in Christ. Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law.

It's quite difficult to grasp what does it mean redeemed from the curse of the law. I found it extremely helpful. Maybe you will too.

[15:57] by understanding there will be people in heaven, there will be those in heaven who will not be redeemed. Do you know that?

I took a while to grasp it. There will be those in heaven who are not redeemed. What do I mean? I mean the angels. Angels never sinned to be redeemed.

they're in heaven. They're not redeemed. They're not there by the redemption of Christ. They're there because they never sinned.

Redemption is being a sinner but being delivered from the curse of the law. the idea of redemption has as its heart.

The idea of being in a situation where you're captured or locked up to and a ransom price has to be paid for your deliverance.

[17:03] Demanded. It's the same connotation we have for the release of hostages. The connotations of hijacking aeroplanes.

Political hostages. Children held at gunpoint. And unless a certain amount is paid into a bank account they're captured and not set free.

That's a connotation. We're held captive just by being born. Or sinners. Or born in sin shaped in iniquity start off life with a prejudice against God.

We need to be redeemed. A ransom price must be paid for our release from that condition. But having said that we need to point out one or two differences.

I'll mention just three. A ransom price is usually paid for the release of captives who are innocent. innocent children held in a school at gun point and not released unless money is paid into a bank account.

[18:20] Okay. The children innocent. In the case of Christ we sinners are not innocent. We're blood red in guilt but Christ still redeemed us.

There's that difference. A second difference is a ransom is usually paid forcefully reluctantly grudgingly Christ paid the ransom for his people voluntarily.

We must never think God the Father twisted the arm of God the Son and say you'll be the scapegoat. You'll go to Calvary. We must never think that.

That's blasphemy. Christ was willing to be the substitute. Christ came running to be the substitute. As somebody has said Christ began to run to our salvation at the sound of the crunching of the apple in the garden of Eden.

So keen was he to be our saviour to redeem us. that's our second difference between what we have today of the release of innocent children.

[19 : 43] But the third thing is worth noting is a ransom is usually paid to the law breaker, to the wrongdoer. Never think the ransom was paid to Satan, the devil, the one who led the human race into sin.

No, no. Hebrews 9, 14 tells us Christ offered himself to God as the judge of all the earth, as a ransom price.

Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law. Now, there's something else in our redemption. It's been delivered out of a certain condition and put into another condition.

The moment someone becomes a Christian, they're delivered from the kingdom of darkness and translated instantly into the kingdom of God's dear Son.

They're delivered from the system of law keeping as the way to get to heaven. As I said, never is the proper way to live, but the way to get to heaven.

[21 : 04] No longer can you get to heaven, as we said, by being good enough for it. Just ask God's people, are they good enough for heaven? Or just even look at them.

They're delivered from a state of being due rightly eternal punishment. But the Christian, the Christian, is not due eternal punishment because Christ took the eternal punishment for them. Christians are never punished for anything in this world, but they are chastised. There's a big difference between chastisement and punishment.

Chastisement is correction. it is something uncomfortable, something maybe painful to put you back on course. You've gone astray.

Now, it is true we use the words interchangeably, chastisement and punishment, but it's important to grasp in what sense are they used.

[22 : 17] Christ took the full punishment of the sins of the believer, the Christian. But we go astray, don't we? Don't we? We go astray.

We have to be put back in life. So he might, he brings the rod of correction, so we go back into life, to live as we should.

We have been delivered from eternal punishment, not eternal, not temporal chastisement, but eternal punishment.

We're delivered from a state of being dead, unable to do good. We're given, a Christian is given the Holy Spirit to believe on Christ, to do good works, to keep the law delivered from that.

And now they're translated into a state, another condition, the kingdom of God's dear son, a state, a condition of total forgiveness.

[23 : 26] All their sins are forgiven, past, present, and future. Get that?

What a risk God takes forgiving Christians. All their sins, past, present, and future, the moment they believe, are forgiven.

Every Christian here, all of us who believe in Christ, are standing before God in a penalty-free zone. We're standing in a penalty-free zone. we are immune from prosecution by God. Not men, not men, but by God.

Why? Because he's been paid for your sins. He's been paid for our sins, as if we're believers. When God looks on us, he sees the perfection of Christ.

[24 : 33] Christ. He doesn't see our sins. He saw them 2,000 years ago, when his son was on the cross, and he accepted Christ's death as full payment for every sin of the Christian.

They're in a state not just of total forgiveness, seen as perfectly righteous, a state of favor with God. So now every problem they come across in life works out for their good eventually.

Not instantly. Not instantly. You see, it's by faith. We've delivered by faith. I don't see how that is doing me any good, we might claim here, but we don't see everything.

We're in God's favor, and even our problems and our trouble are blessed by God to us eventually.

And the wonderful thing about being in the kingdom of Christ, it's secure, secure, more secure than Adam was in the garden of Eden.

Adam was created perfect, but it was losable, and he did lose it, and he didn't just lose it for himself, he lost it for you and me, because now we're born in sin, shaping in iniquity.

[26 : 10] And all that is possible through Christ paying for our sins according to the scriptures.

Christ paid for our sins. God has no complaint. God hasn't changed his standards. He's been paid in advance.

And the mark you're a true Christian, you're a true believer, is that you're afraid you'll sin. You don't want to sin. I tell you, if you don't want to sin, that's not natural.

That's the grace of God working in you. So our last question, how is this redemption of Christ obtained? Only by faith.

Not by being good enough. Only by faith in Christ. Accepting Christ's death at the cross as an atonement for your sins.

[27 : 18] Now, if you're here, and you're new to Christianity, you're not a Christian, I'm sure if I was, if you are convicted of sin, and you want your sin forgiven, and you want to get to heaven, you might be saying something like this, well, I'll have to be better before God will hear my prayer.

Well, I sang, I asked us to sing Psalm 130 for a special reason. We sang there in verse 4, but yet with thee forgiveness is that feared thou mayest be, or, as it could be translated, but yet with thee forgiveness is that in order that you can be feared aright.

If you're not a Christian, you'll go saying, I'll have to sort my life out first before God will hear me.

Well, you certainly have to sort your life out, but only Christ can sort it out.

You can't sort it out first. Come to Christ first. Believe in Christ first. It's Christ that will help you sort your life out. It's believing in him.

The first, that's why the gospel is not, now listen, sort yourself out first, and then believe in Jesus. the gospel is believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.

[28 : 51] Faith alone in Christ's death is the one and only condition of salvation by the grace of God.

Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you'll be saved. Or, the last verse I'll quote, he that believes on the Son, has already passed from death to life.

If you believe, there's no other way to heaven, there's no other way to forgiveness, but by believing and trusting in the Lord Jesus Christ.

May God, the Holy Spirit, make his word his truth, his gospel, effectual to every one of us.

Let's bow our heads. Our Father in heaven, please take the things of Christ and make them ours today, here, now, in this place.

[30 : 05] Your Spirit is here. may none grieve, quench, resist them. O Lord, bind us up with your Son, Jesus, for your own glory.

Amen. let's conclude our service by singing from Psalm 28 in the Scottish Psalter.

Psalm 28 in the Scottish Psalter, page 238. Page 238, we sing verses from verse 9 to the end.

Psalm 28, sorry, verse 6 to the end. Psalm 28 verse 6, forever blessed be the Lord, for graciously he heard the voice of my petitions and prayers did regard.

We sing the last verse to the last verse. O thine own people, do thou save, bless thine inheritance, them also do thou feed, and them forever more advance.

[31 : 12] Psalm 28 verse 6, forever blessed be the Lord. Be the Lord. Forever blessed be the Lord, for faith has been heard, the voice of my petitions, unbeknownst unbeknownst unbeknownst did we guard.

The Lord's life strength of me and my heart upon the heavenly life.

real life. On thy arm heaven hence my heart does joy exceeding thee.

And with my soul love man who ever prays their strength is God alone, he also is the saving strength of this anointing God that heaven he life doc hisruct and avere her might happen to also do love thee and they forever more advanced.

The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all now and forever more.

[34 : 10] Amen.