The Purpose of the Law
Galatians 3:15-29 (NKJV)

- Today we make our way back to Galatians where Paul is speaking to the churches of Galatia about their liberty.
- The theme for Galatians can be found in…

“Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free, and do not be entangled again with a yoke of bondage.” Galatians 5:1 (NKJV)

- Paul knows what it’s like to walk in legalism and try to relate the Father through the works of the law, it only lead him to bondage and bitterness.
- That’s the fruit of legalism.
- But now that he has been apprehended by the grace of God, the love of God, there has been a new found liberty by which Paul now serves the Lord.
- And his hope in writing this letter to the churches in Galatia is to remind them to stay in the love that brings liberty, not the law that brings bondage.
- It seems that there were some who were calling themselves sons’ of Abraham, speaking of their Jewish heritage as if it was something that gave them a special place into the kingdom.
- And so Paul reminds the church, notice…

Vs. 15-18 – “Brethren, I speak in the manner of men: Though it is only a man’s covenant, yet if it is confirmed, no one annuls or adds to it. Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ. And this I say, that the law, which was four hundred and thirty years later, cannot annul the covenant that was confirmed before by God in Christ, that it should make the promise of no effect. For if the inheritance is of the law, it is no longer of promise; but God gave it to Abraham by promise.”

- The point that Paul is trying to make is that the promise that was given to Abraham was that through his seed would come the promised Messiah.
Notice the capital S here is vs. 16 – “Now to Abraham and his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, ‘And to seeds,’ as of many, but as of one, ‘And to your Seed,’ who is Christ.”

Speaking of divinity, speaking of Christ.

And when Abraham believed that Christ would come through His seed it was then he was made righteous.

And Paul reminds them the promise was given 430 years prior to the law.

Paul’s point, the promise was not based upon Abraham following the law; the law had not even been given.

And when the law was given it did not override the promise that had already been given.

The law did not make the promise void.

So the question rises, why was the law given? If it was not given to make one righteous, then why was it given?

Vs. 19 – “What purpose then does the law serve? It was added because of transgressions, till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made; and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

The law was added because of sin.

It was God’s way of giving man a standard by which to live by so that he would not destroy himself before the Messiah came.

By the time the law was given man had already been destroyed once.

“Then the LORD saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the LORD was sorry that He had made man on the earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the LORD said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them.’” Genesis 6:5-7 (NKJV)

God knew man’s propensity towards evil, it had already lead them to destruction once.

So the law would be added as a way for man to know and understand God’s intent for healthy and moral living.
Paul would even remind the Roman’s that the Jew’s would be given the law to follow but he made sure that the law was written on the heart of the Gentile, so that no one is without an excuse in this area.

“for when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do the things in the law, these, although not having the law, are a law to themselves, who show the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and between themselves their thoughts accusing or else excusing them,” Romans 2:14-15 (NKJV)

So the law was given to give man a compass for right living.
The Jew’s received it on Mt. Sinai, but the Gentiles had it written on their hearts.
So nobody is without excuse when it comes to God’s Law.
It’s a way for us to understand God’s heart for Holy living.
But secondly, it also is a way for man to realize how great the gap is between a Holy God and sinful man.
It was added to expose man’s sin and ultimately cause man to seek the Savior.
Or Paul put’s it this way in Vs. 19 - “…till the Seed should come to whom the promise was made;”
The law was given to prepare us for the seed to come.
That being the Messiah.
And it’s important to note it isn’t that the Law of Moses was revoked when Jesus came but the law was fulfilled.

“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfill.” Matthew 5:17 (NKJV)

He fit the bill perfectly.

Have you ever had someone pay a bill for you? Years ago Wendi and I had a table custom made for our home, it was pricy so we asked if we could make payments on it and they agreed. At about Christmas time when we had saved up the money we went in to pay the bill and they said it had already been paid, paid in full. We didn’t know at the time who paid for it, but a couple week’s later when Christmas rolled around it was delivered and my in-laws showed up at our door to surprise us. They had paid the bill for us.
That’s exactly what Jesus did, He paid the bill that the law required of us and He did it perfectly.

Notice, Paul will even remind us.

Moses was given the law through a mediator by angels. Vs.19 says “…and it was appointed through angels by the hand of a mediator.”

The law that was given at Mt. Sinai was given to Moses by the Lord through a mediator by the angels.

And then he says…

Vs. 20 – “…now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.”

Now in this side of the cross Jesus is our mediator, we don’t need angels, we don’t need Moses to show up, both are inferior to Jesus who was the Son of God.

Moses and angels were created; Jesus is creator.

We don’t have to go to a mountain because Jesus went to the cross.

“For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus,” 1 Timothy 2:5 (NKJV)

“But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, inasmuch as He is also Mediator of a better covenant, which was established on better promises.” Hebrew 8:6 (NKJV)

So not only did Jesus fit the bill but He is also our mediator, He is our go between when it comes to the Father.

And so Paul anticipating the question coming next…

Vs. 21 – “…is the law against the promises of God? Certainly not…”

The law is not something evil it’s not opposing God’s promise.

That law just cannot provide a righteous standing before God.

Vs. 21 –“…for if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.”
Vs. 22 – 25 – “But the scripture confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed. Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.”

- Notice, Paul gives us three illustrations to help us understand our relationship with the law.

1. It confined us. To shut together to close or enclose
2. It guarded us. To protect or keep
3. It was a tutor for us. A servant whose job is to take the children to school.

Some of you back in the day remember riding the bus to school. My brother and I would go two blocks away from my home and wait for the bus to pick us up. We rode the fish bus; each bus was given an animal name for us to distinguish them. My favorite bus driver was a lady named Sandy because she drove an older bus, the type with the long tail end and I always sat in the back. When we got to the last block before school she would fly over this bump, so when we got close to the school we would start bouncing on the seats. When we hit that bump we would see who could bounce closest to the ceiling. We loved it and Sandy was awesome. The whole purpose of the bus ride was to get us to school, to get us to our destination. The bus was not the destination; Sandy’s sole purpose was to get us to the elementary campus.

- That’s exactly what the law’s purpose is it’s the vehicle that God uses to get us to His Son.
- The law was put there by our Creator to show the need for our Creator. It kept us, held us, guarded us and when the door opened we got off and embraced the Savior.
- It would be silly to still be cruising around in that bus today.
- That’s why the psalmist says to us…

“The law of the LORD is perfect, converting the soul…” Psalms 19:7 (NKJV)

- We don’t need anyone to bring us to Jesus after we have received Jesus. There is no need for a tutor, a schoolmaster, or school bus to get us to our destination if we are already there.
• But if we have not received Christ by faith then the law will keep showing up, the bus will keep showing up until we get on it.
• Notice where this bus takes us. What we become when we get to our destination…

Vs. 26 – “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.”

• We become a son or daughter in the family of God.

Do you see yourselves as family? You are.

• Not only are we family but also Paul will remind us we have been given a new identity. Notice…

Vs. 27 – “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.”

• Those who have been baptized in Christ have put on Christ.
• You have been given a new identity.

“Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; old things have passed away; behold, all things have become new.” 2 Corinthians 5:17 (NKJV)

• Your new identity is Christ, that’s what you put on each day.

I grew up in the 80’s. I didn’t know it at the time, but I look back on those years and I had serious identity issues. My freshman year I shaved my head and started listening to Sid Vicious. My sophomore year my hair stood straight up, I crimped it and had the psychedelic look. I also listened to Echo and the Bunny Men. Junior year I went out for the tennis team, they were all preppies and so guess what? Yep preppy, can’t remember the music. Senior year I went back to the look of the junior high years with long hair, I even grew a mustache, it was bad, you want a peek? Yep, Rat was the music of the day.

• Not until I surrendered my life to Christ did all that stop, the craziness stopped.
• Christ had met a need deep in me that my friend’s and fad’s couldn’t.
• That was 28 years ago and nothing has changed from that day forward.
Now I will say, even though Christ lives in me and I have been given a new identity, there is a daily responsibility for me to live out that new identity.

Paul would tell the church it’s as simple as putting on and putting off.

“that you put off, concerning your former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your mind, and that you put on the new man which was created according to God, in true righteousness and holiness.” Ephesians 4:22-24 (NKJV)

“But now you yourselves are to put off all these: anger, wrath, malice, blasphemy, filthy language out of your mouth. Do not lie to one another, since you have put off the old man with his deeds, and have put on the new man who is renewed in knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,” Colossians 3:8-10 (NKJV)

“Therefore, as the elect of God, holy and beloved, put on tender mercies, kindness, humility, meekness, longsuffering; bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do. But above all these things put on love, which is the bond of perfection.” Colossians 3:12-14 (NKJV)

Now that you have been given a new identity, a new way of living, you are a new creation, live that way.

Put on the new man and with that you will see the fruit of the spirit flowing through your life.

It will be the fruit of faith, no longer the work of our flesh.

And you will see as I have seen He’s not a fad that goes out with the times. He’s not a song that gets old after a while. But He’s a loving Father who will give you a new identity and the cherry on top will be a new eternal destiny.

Let’s finish up….

Vs. 28 – “There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus.”

At the time this would have been written a Jewish rabbi would often include in his prayer something like this, “God thank you that I was not born a Gentile, a slave or a women.”
• The dividing lines were amazing, Jew’s did not walk on the same side of the street of a Gentile.
• And now Paul who was a Jewish rabbi before he came to Christ can now see the heart of God from the beginning of time.
• In Jesus Christ all of our dividing lines no longer divide us.
• It doesn’t mean that they don’t exist.
• We are still male and female. We might still embrace our ethnicity or culture or even political persuasion.
• But in Christ we do not allow them to be a barrier to our fellowship with one another.
• We do not wave that flag anymore, it’s inferior to the most important One.
• The King and the Kingdom.
• Our final destination…

“For our citizenship is in heaven, from which we also eagerly wait for the Savior, the Lord Jesus Christ,” Philippians 3:20 (NKJV)