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Sermon Notes

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## **No Longer Imprisoned by Law, Now Heirs According to Promise**

**Galatians 3:23-29**

Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*: Christian seeking to escape the wrath of God about to fall on the "City of Destruction" flees for his life, following the advice of a man named "Evangelist"; he has a terrible burden on his back which in the story represents his weighty sense of guilt for his sinfulness. He meets a man named "Mr. Worldly-Wiseman," who counsels him to go to the town of "Morality" and there he will meet a man named "Legality" who is an expert at getting such burdens off people's backs. But in order to get to the village of Morality, Christian had to leave the path he was on and climb a high hill. And as he approached that hill, he found that it got higher and higher and more and more threatening. It actually seemed to hang over him and it threatened to fall on him and crush him. Moreover, there came terrible flashes of fire and his burden got heavier and heavier... so he was paralyzed and did not know what to do. Then Evangelist came to him again, and scolded him for leaving the true path and trying to earn his salvation by works of the Law.

This has been a common journey for many struggling with guilt for their sins... they try to pay for their sins by some form of law-keeping

In 1732, George Whitefield, the son of a tavern owner, enrolled in Pembroke College in Oxford. He was only 17 years old. He soon joined a group of very seriously religious students called the Holy Club, led by two serious men—John and Charles Wesley. They were so meticulous in their pursuit of holiness that others began calling them "Methodists." George Whitefield became more and more concerned about his soul, and fasted and deprived himself of sleep and of warmth in the winter snows... his asceticism was so extreme that his hands began turning black and he could barely crawl up the stairs to his dorm. Others feared he was about to die. But someone gave him a soul-saving booklet written by Henry Scougal entitled, "The Life of God in the Soul of Man." It taught him the basic truth of Christianity: the doctrine of the new birth, resulting in a genuine spiritual union with Christ by faith alone. Everything changed for Whitefield. He was born again, and would spend the rest of his life preaching the New Birth to audiences.

Tim Keller: "Many Christians (though not all) testify that when they first became aware of their need for God, they went through a time of immaturity in which they became extremely religious. They diligently sought to mend their ways, and do religious duties

to “clean up their lives”. They made tearful “surrenders” to God at church services. They “gave their lives to Jesus” and “asked Him into their hearts”. But so often, they were really only resolving to be very good and religious, hoping this would procure the favor and blessing of God. At this stage, they tended to have a lot of emotional ups and downs (like children), feeling good when they made a spiritual commitment, and despondent when they failed to keep a promise to God. They felt a great deal of anxiety.” [Keller, 85]

As we come to Galatians 3:23-29, we come to the culmination of Paul’s argument in this chapter on the true gospel vs. the legalistic message of the Judaizers.

In Galatians 1-2, Paul showed that the gospel he preached is the true gospel, sent from heaven, not from men. The gospel he preached to these Galatians was the true one... the one the Judaizers were preaching was false... In this chapter, he began (vs. 1-5) with their EXPERIENCE: they heard the gospel of Christ crucified, and believed it, and then received the outpoured Holy Spirit as a free gift proving their justification. How could they who began by the Spirit now try to finish their Christian lives by the flesh... by human efforts at law-keeping. He then proved from SCRIPTURE that Abraham was justified by faith, not by Law.

In verses 6-14, he shows that justification is by faith not by Law; and all those who follow Abraham’s faith are his sons...to receive Abraham’s blessing, you had to believe not obey LAW. On the contrary, those who try to obtain the blessing by Law have to obey EVERYTHING IN THE LAW ALL THE TIME... they can’t, so the Law only brings a curse.

So then, WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THE LAW to begin with?? How does it relate to us in Christ?

## I. The Law Was Our Jailer and Guardian... to Bring Us to Christ

### A. The Purpose of the Law

1. If the Law couldn’t save our souls, why then was it given?
2. Many answers to that question, but let’s stick to two themes established here... the Law as a Jailer, and the Law as a Custodian or Guardian
3. According to Paul’s argument here, the Law had a temporary role to play in Redemptive History, and that time ends when faith in Christ comes
4. God was very wise in giving the Law; there is nothing wrong with the Law; it had a very good purpose; but the direct salvation of souls by means of obeying the Law was not God’s purpose... else God has failed
5. So Paul is answering the question of the role of the Law here...

6. In Romans, he defends the Law itself more directly

***Romans 7:7 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not!!!***

***Romans 7:12 So then, the law is holy, and the commandment is holy, righteous and good.***

7. But here in Galatians 3, Paul is revealing some of God's purpose in giving the Law... but he is also emphasizing that when faith in Christ comes, the Law no longer plays those two roles: jailer and guardian

#### B. Is Paul Speaking Personally or Nationally?

1. In other words, in these verses, is Paul talking about the Law's purpose in an individual sinner's salvation or in the history of the Jewish nation?
2. Very important question! In Romans 7, Paul speaks very personally about what the Law did in his life... for him personally... to expose the wickedness and sinfulness of his own heart.
3. Here in Galatians 3, it seems at least possible that he is speaking more in terms of Redemptive History, what role the Law played in Jewish history
4. Both are valid answers, valid themes... and we can see the importance of understanding each
5. The Law had a role to play in the lives of individual Jews, and the Law had a role to play in the history of the world through the history of the Jewish nation
6. In both cases, once the "era of faith in Christ" comes, the Law no longer plays those roles either for the individual or for the Jewish nation
7. For the individual sinner (Jew or Gentile), the Law plays a role in making the sinner despair of personal righteousness and in bringing the sinner to faith in Christ
8. For the Jewish nation, the Law plays a role in preparing the way for Christ to make His entrance into Redemptive History
9. Understand that the two are intensely intertwined: the Jewish nation was raised up in human history as a LABORATORY OF SALVATION... "Here, Gentile world, look at what we learned about God, His promises, His generosity, His power, His Law, our own salvation... etc." And the Jewish nation itself was made up of individuals who themselves had to find salvation from their sins... so the Law's role for the NATION had individual ramifications for all sinners around the world

#### C. The Law as Jailer: The Personal Side

***Galatians 3:23 Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed.***

1. Time orientation: “Before this faith came...”

- a. Following the flow of the argument in Galatians, Paul is speaking of individual experience of Law and salvation in verses 21-22

***Galatians 3:21-22 Is the law therefore contrary to God's promises? Absolutely not! For if a law had been given that was able to give life, then righteousness would certainly be by the law. <sup>22</sup> But the Scripture has imprisoned everything under sin's power, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.***

- b. The Law is not the enemy of God’s intention in the promises given to Abraham... Law and Promise BOTH come from God and are not enemies
- c. But the Law had no power to bring about the promise... the promise of eternal life and eternal blessedness in a sweet and beautiful relationship with God
- d. The Law had no power to make people righteous; rather God intended to IMPRISON EVERYONE ON EARTH (not just Jews) under sin’s power... that we would realize that we are POWERLESS to save ourselves... this imprisonment under sin and Law would continue until faith in Jesus Christ comes to set the sinner free from sin and from the Law’s condemning power
- e. Verse 22 makes it plain that once faith in the promise of life in Jesus Christ comes, the imprisonment ends FOR THOSE WHO BELIEVE...
- f. So verse 23 just picks up on that flow...

***Galatians 3:23 Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed.***

- g. This is the Law as prison warden...

2. Law as a Prison Warden... a Jailer...

- a. Here the Law functions very negatively: instructing us what sin is, drawing sin out of us, then condemning us of those sins... and LOCKING US UP IN GUILT with NO REMEDY at all!!!
- b. The Law teaches us God’s righteous standards; the Law commands total, comprehensive obedience

“I am the Lord your God... you shall have no other gods.

You shall not make any idols or worship any idols.

You shall not take the name of the Lord in vain.

Remember the Sabbath Day by keeping it holy; do all your work in six days and rest on the seventh.

Honor your father and mother.

You shall not murder.

You shall not commit adultery.

You shall not steal.

You shall not bear false witness against your neighbor.

You shall not covet anything that belongs to your neighbor.”

“Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, with all your mind, and with all your strength.”

“Love your neighbor as yourself.”

These commandments describe God’s righteous heart, His righteous expectations... those commandments, and hundreds of others, are pure and altogether righteous.

BUT WE FIND THAT WE CANNOT OBEY THEM!!!!

- c. Because the Law actually draws sin out from us... it gives our rebellious, wicked hearts a chance to rebel and be wicked... if there were no Law then there by definition could be no sin... if we were permitted to do anything we wanted whenever we wanted, we could not sin
- d. The Law comes and shows us God’s righteous standards... and our inner sin nature rises up to challenge it and to seek to shake off the shackles of its requirements
- e. In Romans 7, Paul speaks of the tenth commandment in the Ten Commandments: “You shall not covet”

***Romans 7:7-11 What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed I would not have known what sin was except through the law. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, "Do not covet." <sup>8</sup> But sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, produced in me***

*every kind of covetous desire. For apart from law, sin is dead. <sup>9</sup> Once I was alive apart from law; but when the commandment came, sin sprang to life and I died. <sup>10</sup> I found that the very commandment that was intended to bring life actually brought death. <sup>11</sup> For sin, seizing the opportunity afforded by the commandment, deceived me, and through the commandment put me to death.*

- f. What happened? Paul was free in the matter of coveting until the Law came into his mind, into his understanding... once he understood what coveting was, he found that he coveted more than ever before... the Law actually INCREASED THE SIN... it didn't just expose the sin, it drew sin out of his already wicked heart

Illus. Imagine a father bringing a cardboard box home and putting it in the corner along with some other items from the office... it sits there, kids walk by it, never even look at it; but suppose he puts that box on the kitchen table, and writes a big sign in red marker saying "DO NOT OPEN THIS BOX!! DO NOT LOOK INSIDE, WHATEVER YOU DO!!" Suddenly, the box becomes very desirable... temptation grows, and eventually one of the kids looks this way, then that way, and opens the forbidden box. The commandment actually DREW THE SIN out of the child's heart

So it is with the Law... the Law didn't put wickedness IN our hearts; but it sure does draw it out

- g. Once the Law defines sin and draws sin, it then condemns us to death mercilessly! The Law cannot show MERCY... it is not designed to show mercy... it assesses you and condemns you. That is all.
- h. So the Law throws the sinner into jail and labels that prisoner GUILTY, AWAITING EXECUTION....
- i. The Law puts every sinner on DEATH ROW...
- j. The Law is our JAILER... but only until FAITH IN CHRIST comes

***Galatians 3:23 Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed.***

John Stott: "After God gave the promise to Abraham, He gave the law to Moses. Why? He had to make things worse before He could make them better. The Law exposed sin, provoked sin, condemned sin. The purpose of the law was to lift the lid off man's respectability and disclose what he really is underneath—sinful, rebellious, guilty, under the judgment of God and helpless to save himself.

And the law must still be allowed to do its God-given duty today. One of the great faults of the contemporary church is the tendency to soft-pedal sin and judgment... We must never bypass the law and come straight to the gospel. To do so is to contradict the plan of God in biblical history... No man has ever appreciated the gospel until the law has first revealed him to himself. It is only against the inky blackness of the night sky that the stars begin to

appear, and it is only against the dark background of sin and judgment that the gospel shines forth.” [*The Message of Galatians*, 92-93; quoted in Keller, *Galatians for You*, 85]

- k. Our age has very little sense of the LAW AS JAILER, though, because very few evangelists and pastors preach clearly the terrors of the Law... the terrors of eternal condemnation for all who are condemned on Judgment Day:
  - l. People think of themselves as “basically good people”... but the Law, if they understand it properly, exposes them as deeply, truly rebellious to the core of their being
    - i) No passage of Scripture does this more than the Sermon on the Mount

***Matthew 5:21-22 "You have heard that it was said to the people long ago, 'Do not murder, and anyone who murders will be subject to judgment.' <sup>22</sup> But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, 'is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.***

***Matthew 5:27-29 "You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' <sup>28</sup> But I tell you that anyone who looks at a woman lustfully has already committed adultery with her in his heart. <sup>29</sup> If your right eye causes you to sin, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.***

***Matthew 5:48 You must be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.***

- ii) Jesus goes deeper, even to the most careless words we ever speak:

***Matthew 12:36 But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken.***

- iii) The terrors of the Law go to infinite level when we consider how the Law will condemn every sinner on Judgment Day to an eternity in the fire of hell:

***Revelation 20:11-15 Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. Earth and sky fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. <sup>12</sup> And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. <sup>13</sup> The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what he had done. <sup>14</sup> Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. <sup>15</sup> If anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***

- m. The Law is a JAILER because it does not speak a single word of relief, not a single word of comfort to the sinner... it can only condemn by justice
- n. The reason so few people feel the LAW AS JAILER is that so few evangelists and witnesses and family members and friends and pastors and theologians tell the truth about all this
- o. BUT once someone receives the truth of the Law and of Judgment Day and of eternity in Hell, but hasn't yet understood the gospel of grace through faith in Christ, they immediately try to earn salvation by resolutions and extreme efforts and they fail... they are in jail and can never get out by their own efforts
- p. Thus the Law brings someone to Christ because before the Law came, the sinner didn't know he/she needed a Savior
- q. The Law tells the bad news so that Christ can be the good news

***Galatians 3:23 Before this faith came, we were confined under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith was revealed.***

[Faith in Christ has to be REVEALED... as it was to Peter:

***Matthew 16:16-17 Simon Peter answered, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." <sup>17</sup> Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by man, but by my Father in heaven.***

***2 Corinthians 5:21 God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.***

***Galatians 3:13-14 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree." <sup>14</sup> He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.***

Before this faith is revealed, though... the sinner is DEAD IN TRANSGRESSIONS and SINS... the Law makes that plain!

This is the Law as JAILER!!! If you have never felt this before, it's likely that no one has ever told you the truth about Judgment Day before

The Law locks us up as sinners, as disobedient people, as wretched rebels by its consistent, righteous, pure demands that we cannot keep perfectly day after day... the Law cannot show mercy—it can only execute justice; and for us sinners, that means CONDEMNATION; So we are locked up until faith in Christ rescues us.

D. The Law as Guardian (also Tutor, Schoolmaster)

***Galatians 3:24 The law, then, was our guardian until Christ, so that we could be justified by faith.***

1. Paul uses a second word and a different image: “paidagogus”: combining Greek words for “child” and “to lead”... KJV has “schoolmaster”; NASB goes with “tutor”; ESV and HCSB use “guardian”...
2. In Greek culture, this would be a slave who was entrusted by the father to take custody of his sons on a daily basis; he would train them and instruct them, discipline them, and most of all protect them from harm. His discipline could be quite harsh as needed
3. The idea is one of protective oversight given to boys who were minors and needed protection and training
4. The Law then kept the Jewish nation very identifiable as a peculiar people... this is the role of CIRCUMCISION and the DIETARY REGULATIONS; the tendency would have been for the Jews to adopt the sinful practices of the surrounding nations and melt away into the general population through sinful idolatry; the ceremonial laws kept the nation JEWISH until Jesus came
5. Now, individually, the Law serves as a TUTOR and GUARDIAN, bringing the immature individual to Christ so that he can be justified
6. So the Law trains, instructs, and protects... but it doesn't justify... FAITH IN CHRIST ALONE JUSTIFIES

**II. The Age of Faith in Christ Has Come... the Jailer/Guardian Has Gone**

***Galatians 3:25-27 But since that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,<sup>26</sup> for you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus.<sup>27</sup> For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.***

- A. Nationally: Once Christ Came to the Jewish Nation, the Time for the Guardian Ended
1. The image is one of growing up, coming to maturity
  2. The child becomes a man; there is no longer any need for the guardian to shepherd the individual through the day
  3. So also when Jesus was born, grew and was presented to Jesus as Savior, the time for the Law as a shaper of Jewish national identity had ended
  4. The Law brought the Jewish nation to Christ

5. Christ brought salvation to the Jewish nation... but only to those who believe in Him, to those who are of the faith of Abraham
6. So the era of the guardian is done
  - a. No more ceremonial laws: circumcision, dietary regulations, festivals and special days
  - b. No more sacrificial system either: the time for animal sacrifice has ended
  - c. The “dividing wall” between Jew and Gentile is gone

***Ephesians 2:14-15 For he himself is our peace, who has made the two one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, <sup>15</sup> by abolishing in his flesh the law with its commandments and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new man out of the two, thus making peace,***

**B. Individually: The Era of the Jailer Ends Forever When Faith in Christ Comes**

1. Once Faith COMES into the heart, the time of being UNDER THE JAILER is done
2. Individually: the sinner comes into the freedom of FULL FORGIVENESS of sins... not by works but by faith in Christ
3. The prisoner is set free... the Law is silenced in its accusations
4. The Scripture testifies to our perfect righteousness in Christ and the silence of the Law as an accuser

***Colossians 2:13-14 When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, <sup>14</sup> having canceled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.***

***Romans 8:1-3 Therefore, there is now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus, <sup>2</sup> because through Christ Jesus the law of the Spirit of life set me free from the law of sin and death. <sup>3</sup> For what the law was powerless to do in that it was weakened by the sinful nature, God did by sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful man to be a sin offering.***

***Romans 8:33-34 Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. <sup>34</sup> Who is he that condemns? Christ Jesus, who died-- more than that, who was raised to life-- is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us.***

**C. Baptized into Christ Means Freedom from the Jailer and Guardian**

1. Once an individual trusts in Christ—by faith—he or she receives the gift of salvation
2. Baptism represents a decisive change that has occurred in the individual's status... justified, adopted, free from accusation

### III. All Believers Are Equally Heirs by Faith in the Promise

***Galatians 3:26-29*** *You are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus,* <sup>27</sup> *for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ.* <sup>28</sup> *There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* <sup>29</sup> *If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*

#### A. The Full Glory of the Gospel of Grace: Adoption into God's Family!

1. The simple fact of adoption is declared in verse 26: YOU ARE ALL SONS OF GOD THROUGH FAITH IN CHRIST JESUS!!
  - a. Wonderful message of grace to the Gentile Galatians!!
  - b. They are full members of God's household NOW by faith!
  - c. The Judaizers' doctrine made them feel like second-class citizens... they weren't fully accepted in God's household... they had to be circumcised and obey the Laws of Moses; if they didn't, they weren't really members of God's family
  - d. But Paul says to these uncircumcised Galatians, You are ALREADY sons of God through faith (not by law)
2. Baptized into Christ = Clothed with Christ
  - a. Powerful image here
  - b. The issue is not so much water baptism but baptism into Christ by the Spirit
  - c. "Baptizo" = "to immerse"
  - d. By the Spirit, we are IMMERSED into Jesus, clothed with His perfect righteousness, cleansed of all sins
  - e. Water baptism is merely an outward and visible symbol of this spiritual IMMERSION

***Matthew 3:11*** *"I baptize you with water for repentance. But after me will come one who is more powerful than I, whose sandals I am not fit to carry. He will baptize you with the Holy Spirit and with fire.*

- f. This represents POSITIONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS in Christ... perfectly righteous in God's sight and adopted into God's family
- g. God is creator of all people, but he is adoptive Father only to those who have faith in Jesus

***John 1:12-13 But to all who did receive Him, He gave them the right to be children of God, to those who believe in His name, <sup>13</sup> who were born, not of blood, or of the will of the flesh, or of the will of man, but of God.***

- h. So if any person has faith in Jesus, they are FULLY ADOPTED

B. The Ground is Perfectly Level at the Cross... and in Adoption

***Galatians 3:28-29 There is no Jew or Greek, slave or free, male or female; for you are all one in Christ Jesus. <sup>29</sup> And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.***

1. The Judaizers were filled with nationalistic pride... they clung to the old distinctions of the Law... barriers, dividing walls of hostility
2. Gentiles were often called "dogs"... they were looked down on spiritually by the Jews; conversely, Gentiles often looked down on Jews for their peculiar ways; history is full of the bitter fruits of anti-Semitism
3. But in Christ, at the foot of the cross, the ground is PERFECTLY LEVEL... the cross of Jesus Christ is the great equalizer; Jewish Christians aren't any more the Sons of Abraham than Gentile Christians... they aren't second-class citizens at all... but FULLY ADOPTED SONS and DAUGHTERS of Abraham and heirs with him of the promises
4. Paul extends this to three forms of distinction

- a. Racial/religious distinction:

***"In Christ, there is neither Jew nor Greek"***

- b. Social status

***"In Christ, there is neither slave nor free"***

- c. Gender

***"In Christ, there is neither male nor female."***

- d. In other words, our REAL IDENTITY at the foot of the cross (and on Judgment Day, before the white throne) is "I AM IN CHRIST"

- e. The only distinction that will matter on Judgment Day is “Sheep” vs. “Goats” or “Christian” vs. “Non-Christian”
- f. So there are NO SECOND-CLASS CITIZENS in the Christian church...  
Jews are no better than Gentiles; white people no better than black people, Americans no better than Orientals; rich people no better than poor people; bosses no better than employees; men are no better than women, or vice versa
- g. Instead of DISUNITY through ARROGANCE... the Christian church is characterized by a UNITY based on the TRINITY

***Galatians 3:28 you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

***Ephesians 4:4-6 There is one body and one Spirit-- just as you were called to one hope when you were called-- <sup>5</sup> one Lord, one faith, one baptism; <sup>6</sup> one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.***

***Deuteronomy 6:4 Hear, O Israel: The LORD our God, the LORD is one.***

***John 17:22 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one***

5. Now... this doesn't mean that these distinctions are MEANINGLESS...

- a. RACIAL: God has created racial and national distinctions to show His amazing diversity and creativity... different peoples from different cultures all coming to the same Christ by the same faith is AWESOME

***Revelation 21:23-26 The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. <sup>24</sup> The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendor into it. <sup>25</sup> On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there. <sup>26</sup> The glory and honor of the nations will be brought into it.***

- b. SOCIAL: God has created some people in society to be leaders, owners, bosses, authority figures, and He upholds those distinctions... and we are to give honor to people with positions of authority and respect them... but we are still ONE in Christ
- c. GENDER: this has to be said most clearly; it is TRUE that in Christ there is neither male nor female; it is NOT TRUE that gender means nothing in God's sight in terms of roles and daily life in society, in the home, and in the church; this verse does not rule out gender-based roles in the church; this verse doesn't permit homosexuality, or same-sex marriages; gender still matters in roles... but NOT IN SALVATION

C. The Glory of Being an Heir With Abraham

***Galatians 3:29 And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's seed, heirs according to the promise.***

1. Awesome statement to these uncircumcised Gentile Galatian Christians... and through them to us ALL
2. Every single person, male or female, rich or poor, influential or insignificant, from any nation on earth who has faith in Christ BELONGS to Jesus inherits what Abraham inherits
3. Gentile Christians are TRULY SONS and DAUGHTERS of Abraham, and heirs with him
  - a. God Himself as our true reward

***Romans 8:17 Now if we are children, then we are heirs-- heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ***

***Genesis 15:1 After this, the word of the LORD came to Abram in a vision: "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your very great reward."***

- b. Eternal life

***1 Peter 3:7 heirs with you of the gracious gift of life***

- c. The New Heaven and New Earth

***Romans 4:13 Abraham and his offspring received the promise that he would be heir of the world***

***Matthew 5:5 Blessed are the meek, for they will inherit the earth.***

- d. The Kingdom of God

***Matthew 25:34 "Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father; take your inheritance, the kingdom prepared for you since the creation of the world.'***

#### IV. Applications

##### A. Have You Come to Christ in Faith?

1. Have you allowed the Law to instruct you in righteousness and condemn you with justice?
2. Look again at the Ten Commandments and the Two Commandments... let them search you and show you your sin
3. Turn away from your own righteousness and turn to Christ in faith

4. The passage speaks about being LOCKED UP under the Law until faith in Christ is revealed... let me REVEAL Christ now by the preaching of the gospel
  - a. Jesus Christ is the Son of God... He was born of the Virgin Mary under the Law to redeem us from the Law
  - b. He died on the cross for our sins... He was raised to life on the third day
  - c. If you repent and believe in Jesus, you will have eternal life

Long my imprisoned spirit lay

Fast-bound in sin and nature's night

Thine eye diffused a quickening ray

I woke, the dungeon flamed with light

My chains fell off, my heart was free

I rose, went forth, and followed Thee!!

- B. Understand the Law's Role in Redemptive History... Both Nationally and Individually
  1. Nationally: The Jews were identified as a separate people until Jesus was born under the Law as a Jew... then those days of distinction were over
  2. Individually: the Law is a Jailer, condemning us and locking us up... once faith comes, the Law no longer locks us up... MOSES SENDS US TO CHRIST!!!
- C. Live in FREEDOM from the Law's condemning power!!
- D. Understand Galatians 3:28 Properly
  1. Complete equality IN CHRIST of all people regardless of race, and socio-economic status, and gender... the ground is perfectly level AT THE CROSS
  2. But this doesn't mean there aren't glorious and beneficial distinctions of diversity in races and social status and there aren't gender-based roles in the church
- E. Embrace and Delight in Unity... and Strive for Greater Unity in Christ

***Galatians 3:28 ... you are all one in Christ Jesus.***

*John 17:22-23 I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: <sup>23</sup> I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*

*Ephesians 4:3 Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*

*1 Corinthians 1:10 I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*