**The Law Was Our Tutor**

**by Pastor Fee Soliven**

**Galatians 3:20-25**

**Thursday Evening**

**July 28, 2022**

**Galatians 3:20-25**

20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one. 21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.

22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. 23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.

24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith. 25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.

**20 Now a mediator does not mediate for one only, but God is one.**

Saints, to have a mediator obviously means that two people are involved in the agreement. A mediator works between two or more parties to aid in communication, effect an agreement, or settle a dispute.

Moses, implied in verse 19, was the mediator who communicated between God and Israel.

God (through angels) mediated the law to Moses, who then gave it to the people. The law could be compared to a contract, which is valid only as long as both sides keep their sides of the agreement.

While God kept his, the people of Israel could not keep theirs. However, God acted on his own when he made his promise to Abraham. There was no mediator. The promises were given and would be kept by God, regardless of the actions of people.

Thus, the promise is superior to the law because the promise is from God alone, meant for eternity, and would not be broken. The law and its mediator, Moses, were temporary, preparatory arrangements designed to confirm the truth of God’s ultimate desire to relate directly with his creatures.

Paul did not put down Moses, but showed the primacy of Christ’s way of faith over the law.

**1 Timothy 2:5-6**

5 For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, 6 who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time…

**Hebrews 12:23-24**

23 to the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven, to God the Judge of all, to the spirits of just men made perfect, 24 to Jesus the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling that speaks better things than that of Abel...

**21 Is the law then against the promises of God? Certainly not! For if there had been a law given which could have given life, truly righteousness would have been by the law.**

Saints, Paul raised another question that might have been troubling his listeners: Is there a conflict between God’s law and God’s promises?

The Judaizers might have even concluded that Paul was inferring that the law was evil. Paul answered with an emphatic, Absolutely not! Both the promises and the law were given by God; both are important, but for different reasons.

God offered eternal life through the promises. Paul’s use of the phrase, new life, refers to spiritual life as illustrated by such other passages as

**John 6:63**

“It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life”

**Romans 8:11**

But if the Spirit of Him who raised Jesus from the dead dwells in you, He who raised Christ from the dead will also give life to your mortal bodies through His Spirit who dwells in you.

**1 Corinthians 15:22**

“For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive”

**2 Corinthians 3:4-6**

4 And we have such trust through Christ toward God. 5 Not that we are sufficient of ourselves to think of anything as being from ourselves, but our sufficiency is from God, 6 who also made us sufficient as ministers of the new covenant, not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

Saints, the law’s purpose was never to give that kind of life. If a law could have been given that people could obey perfectly, then the law would have given life and we could have been made right with God by obeying it. The law is not evil; it is very good. But not for salvation.

**22 But the Scripture has confined all under sin, that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.**

Saints, sin affects all of humanity without discrimination; we are all prisoners of sin. By Scriptures, Paul may have had in mind…

**Deuteronomy 27:26**

“Cursed is the one who does not confirm all the words of this law.' And all the people shall say, 'Amen!'

**Romans 3:10-18**

10 As it is written: "There is none righteous, no, not one; 11 There is none who understands; There is none who seeks after God. 12 They have all turned aside; They have together become unprofitable; There is none who does good, no, not one."

13 "Their throat is an open tomb; With their tongues they have practiced deceit"; "The poison of asps is under their lips"; 14 "Whose mouth is full of cursing and bitterness." 15 "Their feet are swift to shed blood;

16 Destruction and misery are in their ways; 17 And the way of peace they have not known." 18 "There is no fear of God before their eyes."

**Isaiah 59:7-8**

7 Their feet run to evil, And they make haste to shed innocent blood; Their thoughts are thoughts of iniquity; Wasting and destruction are in their paths. 8 The way of peace they have not known, And there is no justice in their ways; They have made themselves crooked paths; Whoever takes that way shall not know peace.

**Psalm 5:9**

“For there is no faithfulness in their mouth; Their inward part is destruction; Their throat is an open tomb; They flatter with their tongue”

Saints, these Scriptures describe the universal sinfulness of humankind. What must be understood, however, is that the Scriptures speak with one voice when describing the human condition—we are sinners.

Through Scripture we discovered that we could not earn a right relationship with God by our good works because our works were not good enough—they were always tainted by sin. But just like a dot of light shining into a dark prison cell, a ray of hope shone for us.

The law showed us our hopelessness on our own, caused us to look elsewhere for hope, and directed us to the Savior, Jesus Christ. We missed the promises by trying to keep the law, but we found that the only way to receive God’s promise is to believe in Jesus Christ.

**23 But before faith came, we were kept under guard by the law, kept for the faith which would afterward be revealed.**

Saints, faith, as spoken of in the Scriptures, does not refer to some innate human power that, when used to its greatest capacity, gives us merit with God no matter what the actual content or object of that faith.

The central point of the gospel is in whom our faith is placed—that is, in Christ. Abraham was justified by his faith and, along with other Old Testament believers, had to trust in God’s grace without knowing much of God’s plan; but their faith was in the coming Savior.

Until people could put their faith in that Savior, the law kept them in a kind of protective custody.

Saints, in a sense, it kept people out of trouble, kept them away from the evil into which their natures might otherwise have led, until faith in Christ would be revealed. That faith then sets people free from the law but leads into the desire to obey God wholeheartedly out of love for him.

**24 Therefore the law was our tutor to bring us to Christ, that we might be justified by faith.**

Saints, we were under the bondage of sin and the law was a taskmaster which the Scriptures describe our disobedience to God

**Romans 11:30-33**

30 For as you were once disobedient to God, yet have now obtained mercy through their disobedience, 31 even so these also have now been disobedient, that through the mercy shown you they also may obtain mercy.

32 For God has committed them all to disobedience, that He might have mercy on all. 33 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out!

Saints, in the Greek culture, a guardian and teacher was a slave who had the important responsibility for the children in a family. A wealthy family might have one guardian for each child. This slave strictly disciplined the child,

conducted the child to and from school, cared for the child, taught the child manners, and gave the child moral training. The guardian’s role was temporary—he or she was responsible for the child until the child reached adult age (probably age sixteen).

The picture of the law serving as a guardian and teacher shows that the law was a temporary measure meant to lead us until Christ came. This leading was meant in the sense of the law watching over us until we could receive our “adulthood,” our full relationship with the Father, through Christ’s coming.

What was the ultimate purpose of the law? Paul repeated it in the last phrase, that through faith in Christ, we are made right with God. The law had its usefulness in pointing out the wrong and providing constant reproof.

The law, through imprisonment and discipline, taught us (though negatively) that justification with God really is through faith alone.

**25 But after faith has come, we are no longer under a tutor.**

Saints, once the child came of age, he or she no longer needed the services of the guardian. Since Christ arrived, offering salvation by faith alone, people no longer need the supervision of the law.

The law teaches the need for salvation; God’s grace offers that salvation. However, the Old Testament still applies today. In it God has revealed his nature, his will for humanity, his moral laws, and his guidelines for living.

The law still serves as a demanding instructor to those who have not yet believed. But we cannot be saved by keeping that law; now that faith in Christ has come, we must trust in Christ.

As Paul will immediately demonstrate, the arrival of faith was not a static experience. Faith had its most basic work in our being “crucified with Christ,” but it immediately pursues its ongoing task:

**Galatians 2:20-21**

20 I have been crucified with Christ; it is no longer I who live, but Christ lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself for me. 21 I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain."

Soon and Very soon, Jesus is about to appear, we are almost out of here!

**1 Thessalonians 4:13-18**

13 But I do not want you to be ignorant, brethren, concerning those who have fallen asleep, lest you sorrow as others who have no hope. 14 For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus.

15 For this we say to you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain until the coming of the Lord will by no means precede those who are asleep. 16 For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first.

17 Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And thus we shall always be with the Lord. 18 Therefore comfort one another with these words.

**1 Corinthians 15:50-54**

50 Now this I say, brethren, that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God; nor does corruption inherit incorruption. 51 Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed-- 52 in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

53 For this corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality. 54 So when this corruptible has put on incorruption, and this mortal has put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written: "Death is swallowed up in victory."

**Short Movie Slide>**

**Acts 2:38-39**

38 Then Peter said to them, "Repent, and let every one of you be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins; and you shall receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. 39 For the promise is to you and to your children, and to all who are afar off, as many as the Lord our God will call."

**Let’s Pray!**

**Benediction**

**"May The LORD bless you and keep you, May The LORD make His face shine upon you, May The LORD be gracious to you, May The LORD lift up His countenance upon you, and give you His (Shalom) peace.” In Jesus Name!**