

Introduction

We are currently studying through Galatians. [Galatians 2:21](#) stated that "...if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for **no purpose**." That is, if one can be reconciled to God through the law, then Jesus's death was **unnecessary**; it had no purpose.

Today, I want to ask the question, *for what **purpose** did Jesus die? Why was His death **necessary**?* [Galatians 3:10-14](#) answers that question. **The law condemns sinners; Christ sets them free.**

As we read these verses, I encourage you to read them from the perspective of a sinner. After all, we are all sinners; no one does what is right **always** ([Rom 3:10, 23](#)). *How do you think a **just** God will deal with a guilty sinner?* [Galatians 3:10-14](#) considers the **only two options** for dealing with sin. You can trust in yourself or you can trust in Christ. **The law condemns sinners; Christ sets them free.**

The law condemns

Verses 10-12 contrast these two options for pursuing righteousness - your works or your faith in Christ. Your faithfulness or His faithfulness.

Relying on the law

The law condemns those who trust in works. [Galatians 3:10](#) "10 For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse..." First *what is the law?* The law refers to God's commands in the OT, specifically to the covenant that God made with Israel through Moses ([Gal 3:17](#); [Rom 5:13-14](#)). *What does it mean to rely on works of the law?* One of the false teachings in the Galatian churches was that one must be faithful to that Mosaic covenant in order to have a continuing relationship with God. That is, if you do not **obey** Scripture, then you **cannot** have a covenant relationship with God. This teaching extends beyond the Mosaic covenant. Many people today insist that a relationship with God requires faithfulness from both sides - us and God. That is, if you do not **obey**, you are not in a covenant relationship with Him.

*What is the **actual** result of requiring such obedience?* [Galatians 3:10](#) "10 For all who rely on works of the law are **under a curse**..." The result is not salvation; the result is **condemnation** ([Rom 4:15](#)). Although a different word is used in [Galatians 1:8-9](#), the point is the same - those who **rely** on the law and those who **teach reliance** on the law are under the curse of sin - eternal separation from God and eternal death. **The law condemns those who trust in it.**

Justification through the law requires perfect obedience. [Galatians 3:10](#) "... for it is written, "Cursed be everyone who does not abide by **all things** written in the Book of the

Law, and **do** them.”” This is a reference to [Deut 27:26](#). That chapter pronounces blessing on those who remain faithful to the covenant (the law) and curses on those who are unfaithful. *Who then is under the curse of the law?* Those who do not “**abide by all things**” in the law, those who do not “**do**” the things written in the law are cursed by the law.

*Who then **does** what is written in the law?* No one **abides** by God’s commands; no one **does** all that God commands ([Rom 3:10, 23](#)). Faithfulness to the law requires **perfection**. [James 2:10–11](#) “10 For whoever keeps the **whole law** but fails in **one point** has become **guilty of all** of it. 11 For he who said, “Do not commit adultery,” also said, “Do not murder.” If you do not commit adultery but do murder, you have become a **transgressor of the law**.”

A roommate once asked me about a recent drug bust on the news. He said it was the largest meth bust in Arkansas history (up to that point). He then informed me that the man who was arrested would be spending the night with us. He was currently out on bail, awaiting his court date. I did not have much that was valuable, but I hid everything that might be valuable. It did not matter to me that he was a drug dealer, not a thief. You may not be a thief, but you might be a liar. You may not be a murderer, but you might be prideful. **It is sin, not severity that condemns us all.**

The law condemns those who trust in works because justification through the law requires perfect obedience. *Do you perfectly keep all of God’s commands? Do you **always** do what is right?* If not, then Scripture warns you that you are condemned in your sin.

Justification by faith

God does not justify men through the law. [Galatians 3:11](#) “11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law ...” *What does it mean to be justified?* **Justified** means to be **proven right** (cf. [2 Tim 3:16](#); [Jam 2:21](#)). In this context (verse 11), it refers to being shown to be **righteous** ([Gal 2:21](#); [3:6](#)). *What does the law fail to do?* The law fails to justify you **before God**. Your effort to obey Scripture may justify you before men, but God knows all of the ways that you **fail** to keep Scripture ([Psa 33:13-15](#); [Heb 4:13](#)). Ultimately, it only matters whether you are justified before God ([Rom 8:33](#)). But **God does not justify men through the law**.

God justifies those who believe. [Galatians 3:11](#) “... for “The righteous shall live by faith.”” This is a quote from [Habakkuk 2:4](#) (cf. [Rom 1:17](#); [Heb 10:38](#)). *By what is a person shown to be righteous?* A person is righteous by their faith ([Gen 15:6](#); [Gal 3:6](#); [Rom 4:1-5](#)). *How can Scripture say that a sinner (an ungodly person) is righteous just because they have faith?* Jesus alone lived a righteous life. He died to bear the sin guilt of those who believe in Him. God regards an ungodly person to be righteous because **in Christ**, God **makes you righteous**. [2 Corinthians 5:21](#) “21 For our sake he made him to be sin who knew no sin, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.”

God does not justify men through the law; He justifies those who believe.

Law versus faith

Reliance on the law is not faith in Christ. [Galatians 3:12](#) “12 But the law is not of faith...” If you trust in the law (your obedience) to show you are righteous or to make you righteous before God, **then you do not have faith.** You cannot be justified by both faith and works. Faith is an admission of the **imperfection** of your works. If you **can** obey the law, then you do not **need** Christ. [Galatians 2:21](#) “... if righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.” **Reliance on the law is not faith in Christ.**

Reliance on the law is faith in yourself. [Galatians 3:12](#) “12 But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who **does** them shall **live** by them.”” *Who lives by the law?* The one who **does** the commands of the law **lives** by the law ([Rom 10:4-5](#)). That is, the only person who benefits from the law is the one who does not sin. Anyone who says that works are necessary for redemption has faith in **himself**, not in Christ.

We see this contrast in the LDS church (Mormonism). They claim that we are saved by God’s grace “after all we can do.” That short phrase says a lot about their theology. They believe that salvation is a joint effort between you and God. God does His part, but only if we do our part. That is, if you are not faithful and obedient, then you are not saved. Salvation depends on **you**. But Scripture teaches that salvation is either a matter of faith or works, never of both.

Reliance on the law is not a matter of faith in Christ; it is a matter of faith in yourself.

Christ sets free

Verses 13-14 get to the heart of our question, *what was the **purpose** of Jesus’s death?*

Christ bore our sins

Jesus frees sinners from condemnation. [Galatians 3:13](#) “13 Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law ...” *What is redemption?* Redemption means to set free ([Gal 4:1-7](#); [5:1](#)). *From what did Christ set people free?* He set us free from the **curse of the law**. Verse 10 says that we are cursed by the law because of sin - our failure to obey. Christ set us free from the condemnation of our sin. [Romans 8:1](#) “1 There is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” **Jesus frees sinners from condemnation.**

Jesus bore our condemnation. [Galatians 3:13](#) “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”—” That last phrase quotes [Deuteronomy 21:23](#), which states that being hung on a tree indicates that someone is cursed by God. Christ was not cursed because of sin; He was sinless ([Heb 4:15](#); [1 Pet 2:22](#); [1 Jn 3:5](#)). Jesus died as a substitute, bearing **our** condemnation. [1 Peter 2:24](#) “24 He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree, that we might die to sin and live to righteousness. By his wounds you have been healed” (cf. [1 Pet 3:18](#)).

Jesus frees sinners from condemnation by bearing our condemnation.

God's blessing in Christ

Jesus sets people of all backgrounds free. [Galatians 3:14](#) "14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles..." *For whom were God's blessings to Abraham intended?* They were intended for people of all nations (Gentiles) ([Gal 3:8](#); [Rom 4:16-18](#)). Your birth, race, nationality, family, etc. do not determine your relationship with God ([John 1:12-13](#)). God's blessing, namely a covenant relationship with Him, was intended for those who are in Christ ([Gal 3:26-29](#)), meaning those who have trusted in Christ alone for forgiveness and redemption. **Jesus set people of all backgrounds free.**

Jesus set us free to give us the Holy Spirit. [Galatians 3:14](#) "14 so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith." *Who is the Holy Spirit?* The Holy Spirit is the eternal God ([Acts 5:3-4](#)). He indwells God's people in the New Covenant and makes us alive in Christ ([Titus 3:5](#)). In the Spirit, God makes you alive and reconciles you with Himself. *Who receives the Holy Spirit?* We receive the Holy Spirit through faith. That is, those who believe in Jesus, with genuine faith, love, and devotion receive the Holy Spirit.

There are a lot of false teachings about the Holy Spirit. The Holy Spirit is not the focus on this passage, so I won't dwell on the topic. But it is important to know **why** God gives us the Holy Spirit. God does not give us the Spirit to excite us or to perform miraculous signs. God gives us the Holy Spirit to bring us to faith in Jesus, to make us alive in Jesus, to eternally seal us in Jesus, and to empower us to point others to Jesus ([John 14:17](#), [26](#); [15:26](#); [16:7-14](#); [Acts 1:8](#)). The Holy Spirit is not given to make us **feel** something. The Holy Spirit is given to us to **exalt Christ**. Beware of every other false teaching about the Spirit.

Jesus sets people of all backgrounds free to give us the Holy Spirit. Life does not come through obedience. Life comes through Jesus's death and the regeneration of the Holy Spirit. Reconciliation with God does not come from obedience. Reconciliation with God comes through Jesus's death and the indwelling of the Holy Spirit.

Conclusion

I asked you to read these verses from the perspective of a sinner - because that is what we are. **Sin has eternal consequences.** Because of your sin, you are **eternally** separated from God. Because of your sin, you are **eternally** dead in your sins. And you didn't just sin against me; you sinned **against God**.

God did not **overlook** your sin. God is **just**. I do not do what is right, but God **always** does what is right, including condemning sin and sinners. God did not overlook sin; God redeemed you from sin through Jesus's death. You must choose **today** whether you will

trust in yourself or in Christ - in **your faithfulness** or **His faithfulness**. *Do you think you can be reconciled to God through your obedience? Do you think you can maintain your relationship with God through your obedience?* **Then Christ died for no purpose.**

[Galatians 3:10-14](#) is a warning to all who rely on works rather than Christ. **The law condemns sinners; Christ sets them free.** Repent of self-reliance and trust in Jesus.

Closing Scripture: [Titus 3:4-7](#) “4 But when the goodness and loving kindness of God our Savior appeared, 5 he saved us, not because of works done by us in righteousness, but according to his own mercy, by the washing of regeneration and renewal of the Holy Spirit, 6 whom he poured out on us richly through Jesus Christ our Savior, 7 so that being justified by his grace we might become heirs according to the hope of eternal life.”