

True Freedom 6

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[0 : 00] Well good morning friends, it is good to gather this morning with you and to look at this passage. Let me add my welcome to Stuart's and those who have gone before. It was a long reading, wasn't it, in 1 Samuel? Thanks for us, for reading that for us.

Let's pray as we spend some time now in Galatians, let's pray. Our Father in heaven, we do ask you to help us to understand your word well this morning, that we might live as your sons and daughters to your praise and glory.

We ask it in Jesus' name, Amen. Well I wonder what your great hope is, what are you hoping for? Let me tell you one of mine, this might be the big one.

It's the beauty pageant one, isn't it? Live in a world without sin, that'd be good. Living in the new heaven and earth where the Lord Jesus reigns unopposed.

Living for all eternity, enjoying the blessings of God. A place where there's perfect relationships, perfect joy, perfect peace, perfect health.

[1 : 01] Everything is perfect. Now if you ask a random sample of people on the street, about what qualifies them to enter a place like that, the answer you'd get is something like this.

I'm a good person, I haven't done anything particularly bad, my good outweighs my bad, God will probably let me in.

In fact, everyone seems to make it to heaven these days. The problem is, God says, that is absolutely wrong.

Wrong because it goes against what God promises. It's wrong because it means that Jesus died for no reason.

It's wrong because it means that God's a liar and we can't trust Him. It's just plain out and out wrong. And so we've seen in Galatians that there's only one true gospel, only one message that saves.

[2 : 00] And that is, Jesus Christ, you see back then in chapter 1, gave Himself for our sins to deliver us from this present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father, to whom be the glory forever and ever.

That is the gospel in a nutshell. And you see that Paul's been writing to this crowd in Galatians, a bit of a map for you, it's a region, it's not a particular church, but there's other churches in that region he's writing to.

And the churches are made up of Jews and Gentiles who are one new nation, people who have received the Holy Spirit and they've believed in God's promises.

And now that makes one new nation of God's saved holy people, Jews and Gentiles have come into it. But now there's neither Jew nor Gentile, but one new nation of Christians.

People who have faith in Jesus and so have received the Holy Spirit of God. That's the guts of Galatians, right?

[3 : 08] Okay. So we've seen Paul needing to correct Peter, because Peter got things wrong, fundamentally wrong, in separating out, again, Jews and Gentiles, those people, those backgrounds.

And then we've seen Paul need to correct the Gentile believers, because the Gentiles have begun to think that they needed to add Jewish works to their life, to have faith in order to please God.

That's what they thought. And so God, through Paul, has shown them that being right with God has always been by faith from first to last. That was last week. So the big question we should be asked now, as we follow Paul's letter to the Galatians, is this.

If being right with God is by faith from first to last, from beginning to end, if it's always been by faith, right, because Abraham was justified by faith, long before Moses, well, why did God give the law?

Why did he do that? What is the point of giving the law? Now, there's been a couple of people switched on asking that question, and good job too, because that's exactly where Paul takes us this morning.

[4 : 34] The law is the first five books of the Bible. That's what the law is, right? Summarised in the Ten Commandments, which were given in Exodus chapter 20, and succinctly put in the great Shema, which is here, Deuteronomy chapter 6 verse 4, Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God, the Lord is one, you shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your might.

And so what follows in verses 15 to 29 of Galatians chapter 3, begins to answer the question of why the law?

Adding weight to the truth, that being right with God, has always been, and will always be, by faith in the promises of God. Now, there is an outline in your bulletins there, you can follow the argument as I try and rattle it through.

So there's two covenants, right? In verses 15 to 18, that's what Paul's talking about here, what God's telling us about. And the law does not replace justification by faith.

Firstly, it can't do it, it just can't. If there's been a covenant made, the covenant stands. You can't change it.

[5 : 52] It's no covenant at all. It wasn't binding. Humans don't do it. Neither does God, right?

And so we see here that that's a human example. Humans make a covenant, and then no one annuls it, or adds to it once it's been ratified. And God has made promises to Abraham.

You read about the key ones in Genesis 12, 1-7, Genesis 15, 1-6, which he quotes here again. The idea that Abraham will receive a land, the idea that the truth is that Abraham will be the father of a great nation, and that through Abraham all the nations will be blessed, and that Abraham believed God's promises, and he was credited, that is, put into his bank account from zero to 100% okay with God, and that by trusting God's promises that happened, he was declared okay with God.

That's how it happened. Now these promises you see here were made to Abraham's offspring. See it there? To Abraham it is offspring.

It does not say to offsprings. So it's singular. Now the idea of offspring singular is important to get a hold of here. That is, it's one nation made up of many people, and it's been brought into the family of God through Abraham.

[7 : 27] And the offspring is one man, through whom the blessing of Abraham comes to the world.

The man, Jesus Christ. And you can read the quote in Acts chapter 13, verse 32. The long-looked-for Messiah, King, Saviour, Redeemer, Son of God, has come.

The one offspring, the one Son, Jesus. And the offspring, being one nation, made up of many people who are all sons of Abraham, that is, people who are just like Abraham, made right with him by trusting the promises of God.

The offspring, being one nation, being made up of many people from all nations, who have now trusted in the promises of God, are now okay with God, justified.

Just as if I'd never sinned. And the offspring, being one man, Jesus Christ, who brings blessing to the world by his sacrificial death, reconciling people to God, bringing about this opportunity for the great new nation, and bringing people into the new land of God, where Jesus rules as king.

[8 : 55] So what does he mean? He says, verse 17, what do I mean? Have a look at it with me.

This is what I mean. The law, which came 430 years afterwards, does not annul a covenant, previously ratified by God, so as to make the promises void.

The law, came 430 years after Abraham, after he was credited righteous, and the promises made that all who by faith would be blessed through him, doesn't annul the promises that were already made with him.

So if our works could justify us, it would make God out to be a liar, because his promise is no promise, and his word has no power. So here's a slide that sort of just shows things a bit more graphically.

Abraham, roughly 1800 BC, Moses, roughly 1400 BC, 430 years later between the two. The promises came in Genesis 12, the promises came in Genesis 15, long before the law came.

Now, Martin Luther gives a really helpful example. Martin Luther was a reformer, speaking passionately about grace. Gives an example about it.

[10:19] He says, just imagine, you imagine, if a rich man, a rich man, adopts a son, who owed nothing to that son, and promises to make that son his heir.

Right? Picture that. Of all his wealth, all he has. So he's made the promise, adopted the son, made him his heir, promised him that everything's going to be his.

Right? And then later on in life, says to the son, he's adopted, here's the laws I want you to live by. The son can't say that he deserved the benefit by his own works, can he?

Because he had it already. The fact is, he'd been made an heir years beforehand. And he'd received it freely, by favour.

He couldn't do anything to, to actually earn it, or deserve it. And it's not because he kept the laws laid down later by his father, who adopted him, that he became the heir, because that would be a lie, wouldn't it?

[11:26] Because the father made him an heir before he gave him the rules. And he can't say he worked for it, earned it, deserved it. So again, you see, salvation, righteousness, justification, receiving the blessings has always been, and will always be, by faith.

So the two covenants look like this, as you can see in your outline, here they are. So you've got Abraham and Moses. This is something we saw at Uni Church, that Josh picked up for us.

Abraham, promises, faith, grace, justification, spirit, blessing, and life.

And Moses, the law, 430 years brings works, not promise, justice, not faith, justice, not grace, condemnation, not justification, flesh, not spirit, curse, not blessing, death, not life.

That's what the law brings. So then, the question, you see on the page then, verse 19, why then the law?

What is the purpose of the law? Now let's get, let's work our way through this, because it's really helpful to get a hold on, right? First of all, because of transgression, that's why the law comes, to reveal and to restrain, because of transgression.

[12:49] So first of all, because of transgression, it reveals, right? Transgression is the idea of crossing a line, there's the line, that's what I shouldn't cross, and every part of my bones is, I want to cross it.

That's sin, that's sin. And so, transgression is being revealed. The giving of the law helps us, and shows us, our sin, very clearly, very starkly.

It shows me, that I'm not righteous, that I'm a transgressor. It reveals, ignorance, contempt, rebellion, against God.

Or it should. It reveals that God is right, and, the world, is deserving, rightly, of God's wrath.

That's what it deserves, that's what it shows. It reveals for all to see, that the world's not living as God, would have us live, rejecting his rule, doing, just stuff, that wreaks havoc in my life, wreaks havoc, and damage, and carnage, to those around about us, and, wreaks havoc, and carnage, and damage, to the world around about us.

[14:07] You just don't have to look too far, to see it, do you? Live and breathe, a couple of weeks, and you see it. That's what the law does. And in doing so, it should create in us, a desperation, and a need, and a desire, to be rescued, from that sin, and the perilous situation, that I'm in, because of my rebellion, against God.

First of all, reveals, transgression. Second, it restrains. At one level, the law, restrains sins, but it doesn't stop it. It doesn't, can't stop it.

The civil law, enables, judges, and rulers, to punish offenders. And so, the fear of, being punished, at one level, restrains, transgressions.

The example, of others being punished, as well, restrains others, from transgressing, in the same way. And the fact, of being punished, this is really important, right?

This is really, really important, in today's day and age, right? The fact, that being punishment, comes, enables, restitution, and re-entry, into society.

[15:27] See, if the, criminals, paid for their crime, then, there can be, restitution made, and they can, be forgiven, and they can, re-enter society.

Our world's, so against that, these days. To be clear, just because, sin is restrained, I know, what to do, and what, not to do, that, doesn't, make me righteous, doesn't make me, okay with God.

It just reveals, my unrighteousness, because of my, inward desire, to always want to, transgress, that law. And the law of God, was written into the, fabric of creation, and so people know, what is right, and wrong, and it's explicitly revealed, clearly, in the word of God.

The law is good, right? The law is good, it's a blessing, for God's people, to have God's rules. I mean, have a look at, Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 7, I'll just read it out to you, Deuteronomy chapter 4, verse 7, this is what God says, through Moses to his people, he says this, for what great nation, is there, that has a God, so near to it, as the Lord, our God is to us, whenever we call upon him, and what great nation, is there, that has his statutes, and rules, so righteous, as all this law, that I've set before you, today.

It's a great blessing, to have the laws, by which society, can function in, and the Jewish nation, had the best. but the law, doesn't, cannot, will not, make us righteous, it reveals, and restrains us, until, the offspring Jesus, comes, and then there can be, real, justification, real, reconciliation, real forgiveness, for when the offspring, comes, there's a great change, that takes place, and so, just to get this, clear, right, we see that the law, was put in place, through angels, see what he's saying here, the law, was put in place, through angels, by an intermediary, now, an intermediary, implies, more than, one party, right, there's got to be, two parties, to be mediated,

[18:09] God is one party, now, the law, is put in place, by Moses, the intermediary, God is the one person, being mediated, and the people, of the world, are the others, being mediated, brought together, or held apart, one level, by the law, you don't need, to mediate people, who are in good relationship, with each other, do you, just don't need to, you know that, I know that, you need to mediate people, who are not in good relationship, with each other, that's what mediators do, that's why you have, marriage counsellors, trying to mediate, relationships, the law, being put in place, only emphasises, that God, and the people, of the world, are out of, step with each other, until, point two, the offspring,

Jesus, comes, the law is in force, until the offspring, Jesus, comes, the law, lasts, until the time, of grace, now that Jesus, come, when the offspring, comes, we enter, we enter, we enter, this time of grace, this time of, God's new way, long anticipated way, or long promised way, of relationship, to be fixed, God's great kindness, is revealed, fully and finally, in his son, the offspring, Jesus, God's great kindness, is given, at one level, that's explained, through the book of Hebrews, at great length, the book of Hebrews, is, but now, that Jesus, come, and so, that the spirit, comes, by faith, on all believers, God's Holy Spirit, is at work, not externally, but internally, working, in my heart, being written, on my heart, by faith,

John chapter 16, we looked at the conference, the spirit of God, convicts us, and, the fruit of the spirit, at one level, constrains us, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control, and so, even today, this is going to push, this a bit further, I'm going to push, a bit further, at one level, the law, that happened, at the cross, the law, lasts, until, the time of grace, comes to people, even still today, let me explain it to you, the right use, of the law, is to restrain sin, convict of sin, and lead people, and lead people, to Christ, to restrain sin, in the lives, of those outside, the kingdom of God, and convict people, outside the family, of faith, that sin, is alive, and well in their life, creating a desperation, to be right, with God, until, in the desperation, and conviction, of sin, they cry out, to the Lord Jesus, in repentance, and faith, cry out, to the one, who can save, cry out, to the promised offspring, who comes to them, by his Holy Spirit, and so saves them, so the work, of the Spirit, is at work, in these days, bringing conviction, of sin, and judgment, that is evident, in the law, and bringing people, to the offspring,

Jesus the seed, that's the purpose, of the law, so then, next question, next question, verse 21, well is the law, contrary to the promises, of God, certainly, definitely, absolutely, no, that's the answer, you see, there is, is the law, then contrary, to the promises, of God, certainly, not, why not, for if a law, had been given, that could give life, then righteousness, would indeed, be by the law, there's no law, of man, there's no religion, of man, and there's no law, given by God, that can justify, anyone, if there was, then, righteousness, would come by the law, but, that's what Paul's been, arguing against, constantly, so far, and what the scriptures, teach, clearly, on the contrary, what goes on then, here we go, here it is, on the contrary, two things, the law, is a prison guard, and the law, is a, guardian, the law, is a prison guard, until, faith, in Christ Jesus, you see there, in verse 22 to 23, the law, the law, is a, binding up, people, under the domain, of sin, and it's only when, justification, by faith, comes, that Jesus, is able to, unbind, take off, the fetters, the law, is not given, to bring about, death, and judgment, that was, already there, prior to the law, the law, reveals, death, and condemnation,

I'll say it again, the law, was not given, to bring about, death, and condemnation, that was already, in the world, before the law, the law, reveals, death, and condemnation, while we're, under the sin,

we're under the curse, we saw last week, chapter 3, verse 20, Deuteronomy, chapter 27, verse 26, we talked about, that last week, this is, the law is there, until, the promise is realized, and the curse, is lifted, and so by faith, in Jesus, we receive the promises, made to Abraham, to be sons, and daughters, justified by faith, so the law is a prison guard, right, and, another aspect, of the law is, a guardian, until faith, in Christ Jesus, verse 24, he's our guardian, that is, someone who would, lead a young person, to and from school, making sure, that they listen, to the teacher, right, not just go to school, but listen, and learn, make sure, they don't go playing, on their iPads, at school, and then, bring them home, from school, to the parents, having learnt something, that's the idea, of the guardian, the guardian, doesn't teach, the guardian, guards, right, and so, that's, what's going on here, the law's a guardian, until faith, in Jesus Christ, until justification, by faith, in Jesus, is revealed, you see there, in verse 24, but, the students of old, the Israelites of old, they didn't like, their Moses, time after time, they rebelled, against him, but the guardian, keeps the student, the student, under authority, actually, imprisons the student, and the guardian, ensures at one level, that the student, learns to read, and to write, and once they have, done their job, they're no longer needed, it's important to understand, that the law, doesn't bring us, to another law, yeah, the law, doesn't bring us, to another law, the law, brings us, to the Lord Jesus Christ, to faith in Jesus, the law, brings me, to a knowledge of my sin, and need, for a saviour,

[26 : 53] I don't, pacify, couldn't, pacify, an angry God, by my good works, can't do that, when Christ comes, we are no longer, terrified, to meet God, to meet God, face to face, the guardian, the law, hands me over, to faith, in the Lord Jesus, faith in Jesus, doesn't hand me over, to a guardian, to the law, got it, and so, the ongoing, daily use of the law, by believers, is the awareness, of sin, and daily repentance, from it, asking God, to forgive me, so now then, verses 25, 29, then, now then, now then, we see what goes on, we are sons, and daughters, verses, verse 25, now that faith, has come, we are no longer, under the guardian, for in Christ Jesus, you are all sons, of God, through faith, why, are we no longer, under the guardian, because in Christ Jesus, we are sons, of God, it's Jesus, who clothes us, see verse 26, so closely, are we now, united to Jesus, that we're viewed, as being in him, rather than, in ourselves, we are now, a new people, clothed in, his, righteousness, not only, we are sons, but we're also, new people, you see it again, comes up there, one new nation, for as many, as baptized into Christ, have put on Christ, verse 28, there is neither, Jew, nor Greek, there's neither, slave, nor free, there's no male, and female, for you're all one, in Christ Jesus, now this verse, has been abused, by too many people, for too long, right, it does not mean, that there's no distinction, between people, right, it means, that there's no distinction, in how people, enter, the new nation, of God's holy people, those who are right with God, I'll say it again, it does not mean, that there is, no distinction, between people, it means, that there's, no distinction, between the way, people, people enter, God's, new nation, those who are right, with God, by faith, of course, there are men, and women, all right, there are, men, and women, of course, there are people, from different, ethnicities, different parts, of the world, of course, there are people, with different, stations, in life, but, we're all, one new nation, saved, justified, sanctified, brothers and sisters, right with God, a nation, now one person, in Abraham, how, how do you get in there, tell me, thank you Lord, we've got it, all right, and so we're now heirs, we are one, we are heirs, for that's what being one, in Christ means, heirs, the promises of God, taken out of the law, and into new birth, as we read, and heard,

Titus chapter 3, verse 4 to 6, but when the goodness, and loving kindness, of God our Saviour, appeared, 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, whom he poured out, on us richly, through Jesus Christ, our Saviour, so that, being justified, by his grace, we might become heirs, according to the hope, of eternal life, what God promised Abraham, we receive, the blessing of being, okay with God, and, let me tell you, much, much more, much, much more, well, living as sons and heirs, what's it mean, a few implications then, of what it means, to be sons and heirs, we'll pick up on heirs, more next week, well a couple of things, right, we won't be thinking, that, we are better, than anybody else, because we're in the family, we're all made right, with God, the same way, by faith, and we won't be thinking, that to become a Christian, is to become, let me say this, it's only because I am, although people think, I'm a Greek God sometimes, we won't be thinking, that we come to Christians, because we're white, Anglo-Saxon males, right, or females, or the culture, that goes with it, our Western culture, needs to be critiqued, by the gospel, of the Lord Jesus, just as, any culture, every culture, needs to be

criticised, and critiqued, by the gospel, of the Lord Jesus, we all have, ethnic backgrounds, but that isn't, to separate us, when we come, to Christ, and, it isn't, by becoming, a certain culture, that you enter, the kingdom of God, the family of Abraham, the Gentiles, repent of their sins, just as the Jew, the Australian, just as the Chinese, the Greek, just as the Korean, the Japanese, just as the Vietnamese, the law, has done its job, bringing us, to Christ, and relying, on his cross, for our righteousness, the law, has done its job, and so, being, in Christ, as, the new nation, the new people, members, of one new family, sons, one new people, co-heirs, of the great blessings, of God, and a certain hope, the certain hope, of the, heavenly land, the eternal, glorious, presence, of God, friends, we must never let, the ugly head, of self-righteousness, we must never let, the ugly head, of works righteousness, we must never let, the ugly head, of division, enter the people of God, that he's united, through faith, in the precious, sacrificial death, of his son, at the cross, so let's pray, that happens, eh, our father in heaven, we thank you, for bringing us, into your family, we thank you, for the death, of the Lord Jesus, which brings about, true reconciliation, with you, and your Holy Spirit, to guard us, to correct us, to rebuke us, to train us, through your word, that we might, producing us, the true character, of the Lord Jesus, please guard us, we pray, Amen.