

## Law Breakers!

07.21.13

As you drove in to church today, How many of you broke a traffic law? Maybe you did not do a complete stop or you swerved over the line. Maybe you went 1 mph or 10 mph over the speed limit. Did you use your blinker every time? There are many traffic laws in which even the carefulest drivers break often. So if so many people break the laws why do they have them?

SAFETY is what we are told.

What about all of Gods laws? How many have you broke this morning in your heart? What is the purpose of the law?

Paul has gone to great lengths to prove God accepts people based on their faith in His promise. Likewise Paul has made it very clear God does not accept a person based on their works of obedience to the law.

Galatians makes it very clear the goal of every believer is to LIVE BY FAITH according to the gospel of Jesus Christ!

Last week we learned our inheritance comes from faith, believing the promises of God. The one promise we are to believe is Christ the Messiah. Jesus is the God/Man, who died on the cross and rose again, to redeem & justify those who repent, believing and confessing Jesus death and resurrection to reconcile with God.

One of the reasons I have enjoyed our study of Galatians is Paul has dealt with many biblical words that have significant application. He has pointed to faith in the grace of Christ as the only avenue to justification, righteousness, Holy Spirit, redemption, sonship, inheritance.

Faith at its core is believing in the work of Christ and not in any personal works of the law. The faith Paul speaks of is more than saving faith. Yes, saving faith is believing the work of Christ is the only sufficient way to be accepted by God, but faith as Paul writes to the Galatians is living faith on a daily basis.

Without faith it is impossible to please God.

As Paul continues focusing on faith in the promise as the goal, he wants his readers to know the role of the law in relation to faith. Paul answers the question, Why did God establish the law if acceptance was never about following the law?

So ... What about the law?

When I think about laws in general, usually I think they ways to nations and government to govern the people equally. For example the speed limit out on I-80 is 65. That law is a way to facilitate an equal bearing of safety as many travel down the road. Laws allow for governance.

Remember when God have the law to Moses, he was establishing His nation. The law given to them would establish an equal means of governing the nation according to God's standard, however this is not the angle Paul takes.

Look at V. 19 and lets examine, "Why did God give the law?"

Look at v.19 ... *It was added because of transgressions*

**One reason** God gave the Law was because of transgressions. Paul is not saying the only reason God gave the law was because of transgression but one of the reasons God gave the law was because of transgressions.

*Transgression* is not a word we use often today. ***Transgression simply means to break a law.*** Furthermore transgression is not about being caught or policed, it is about the act of breaking the law.

Driving 56mph down wolf road is a transgression even though you will probably never be caught or policed for driving over the speed limit. Cheating on a test is a transgression. **A transgression is breaking the law.**

Paul says one reason God added the law was because of law breakers.

Starting with Adam and Eve mankind has been transgressing God's law.

**"for sin indeed was in the world before the law was given, but sin is not counted where there is no law. Yet death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those whose sinning was not like the transgression of Adam, who was a type of the one who was to come. (Romans 5:13, 14)**

It did not matter what command God gave, man broke it. Adam, Cain, the flood, the tower of babel, throughout all recorded history people have been law breakers. All people have been law breakers.

For all have sinned, there is none righteous not even one, All have been led astray, all all short of the glory of God.

God gave the law so people would know they were law breakers.

Romans helps us understand Paul's teaching regarding this purpose of the law and promise of Jesus.

Turn over to Romans 3:19-20

19 Now we know that whatever the law says it speaks to those who are under the law, so that every mouth may be stopped, and the whole world may be held accountable to God. 20 For by works of the law no human being will be justified in his sight, since through the law comes knowledge of sin.

Not only are all people are under the law and are accountable to God but the law also gives us knowledge of sin, or breaking Gods standard. In fact Paul develops this theology of law through chapter 5 where he concludes.

Romans 5:20 says, "The law came in to increase the trespass."

**Came in literally means came in by a side road.** The *main road* is the covenant of promise, which is Christ. The law on the other hand is a side road intended to point people back to the main roads.

What is meant by a side road is NOT back road. The law is not another way to God, there is only one way. Rather it is a side road that leads to the main road. The law serves the needs of pointing people to faith in God's promises. The law is a frontage road.

On the avenue of the cities there are portions with frontage roads. You've all driven on these roads. The frontage roads were added to allow access to the avenue from businesses and homes. The frontage roads provide convenience for getting to and from the avenue.

The Frontage roads are not intended to be used as the main road. In fact if you have ever tried to race traffic along the side road you know how futile it is. Most of us get to the avunue throught these side roads.

This is the one purpose of the law. It is to lead people, Israel and us, to the promise of Christ. The law is not intended and was never intended to be crutch for righteousness.

Notice Paul's words in Romans 3:20 "for by works of the law no one will be justified" (declared just as if they had never sinned, declared righteous)

**How does breaking the law point us to faith?**

**V. 19 says, Law points to faith because it adds transgression.** Here is where I find Paul's words get very interesting. For the moment we dig a little deeper

into these words because they can be taken one of two ways, which are completely opposite.

Paul wrote, *the law was added because of transgression.*

Because is a word that explains why. Unfortunately, the greek and English remain vague as to the tense of this preposition.

*Some say transgression is preventative.* The laws purpose was to restrain or prevent sin. In other words the law kept a bad situation from getting worse. Therefore the nature of the law has the power to curb men's behavior. This is the reason I gave at the beginning dealing with the laws purpose to govern the behavior of mankind.

Does the law have the power to curb mankind's behavior?

Do our laws have the power to curb mankind's behavior? My belief is ultimately no. It may for a while influence and temporarily change behavior, but it does not curb mankind's behavior.

*If you are running late for something important, does the speed limit keep you from speeding? NO!!!*

Israel is a real life example. Did the law curb their behavior? At times, but over the course of history, NO they became more wicked more wicked until God sent a deliverer or prophet to revive them.

The law may serve as a temporary prevention but sooner or later man breaks every rule because our heart is wicked and deceitful.

I do not think Paul means the law has the ability to change mankind's behavior nor our heart. Otherwise the law may provide perfect living. We know this is impossible.

***Others say the law is provocative in nature.*** The law's purpose is to increase sin. Not to tempt man to sin, but to point out how often men sin or break God's law. In other words the law makes a bad situation, much worse. Therefore the nature of the law is its power to make men more sinful.

Does the law make a person more sinful? Of Course it does because it points out every transgression and breakage. Without the law Romans says we would not know sin.

*I agree with Luther here when he wrote, "the Chief and proper use of the law is to increase transgressions, to make a terrible situation even more desperate"*

and to reveal to human beings their sin, blindedness, misery, wickedness, ignorance, hate, and contempt of God, death, hell, judgment, and the well-deserved wrath of God.

I believe Paul is telling the Galatians and us today the law was added to make mankind so desperately sinful, so hopeless lost, so great a law breaker that our only hope can be the promises of God found in Jesus Christ's death and resurrection.

**Friends, the law makes you and me a law breaker.** This is Paul's point. The law was not about righteousness, but about pointing out unrighteousness.

Turn to **Romans 4:15**

**For the promise to Abraham and his offspring that he would be heir of the world did not come through the law but through the righteousness of faith. For if it is the adherents of the law who are to be the heirs, faith is null and the promise is void. For the law brings wrath, but where there is no law there is no transgression.**

Once again the emphasis of the scriptures is constantly faith, belief, trust. The promise to be believed was not through law but faith. WHY? Because the law brings wrath.

One purpose of the law is to point us to the promise because we cannot be accepted before God through law we are only condemned by the law. We cannot be righteous through keeping the law because even if we could keep the law, it was not given for that purpose. The law was given to point us to Christ.

Think about it from a teenager's perspective because most of you have been or had teenagers in the home and we know how mature and responsible teenagers are? ... Right...?

If your parents did not set a curfew, how late did you stay out on Friday night? 10? 12? 2? Without a curfew, if you stayed out all night and showed up at breakfast, how would you have responded to your parents? Well I didn't have a curfew so I didn't break any rules ... all the while knowing in your heart you had transgressed against your parents wishes.

However, even for the most lenient parent the point isn't curfew, it is safety, honor, and what is best for the child. For the law, it was added to point out how often we fail what is best for us by God's wishes and God's glory.

The law takes breaking God's wishes from a heart issue to an action. However, the law will never change the heart, only the gospel changes hearts. That is why it points us to live by faith, following God's principals.

This is Paul's point, once God gave the law it pointed out how often God's standard principals are broken. The law was added to make the hearts bad situation of rebellion, so much more real and worse that the only thing the heart can cling to is the promise of God, Jesus Christ.

What if we had no posted speed limit on wolf road? Just a drive a safe speed limit. More appropriately it would need to read, drive at your own risk! Cars would be flying down the road at 80-90 mph all the while those drivers would know in their heart they are breaking the laws intent but the real law ... that is debatable.

Such is the purpose of the law, it reveals our transgressions (breaking the law) and it points us back to the only safe place, faith in God's promises.

Friends, this is why living by faith is so important! It is God's only way! Jesus said, "I am the way, the truth, and the life, no one comes to the Father except through me," again, "everyone who lives and believes in me shall never die."

This is why Paul add in verse 19, The law was added *until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made.*

**The offspring is Christ according to verse 16.** Therefore until the Christ came, the law served to point God's people back to His promises God gave to Abraham. "All nations shall be blessed." Once the promise had come, we find the laws termination with Jesus completed work on the cross and with resurrection.

Col. 2:13-14 and you who were dead in you trespasses and the uncircumcision of you flesh, God made alive together with him having forgiven us all our trespasses by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross.

The curse of the law was redeemed at the cross. This is verses 13-14. Those who look forward to that promise were redeemed by their faith in the promise coming true. Until that promise came true they remained hoping in the Messiah not through the law but through faith.

For those after the redeeming work of Christ, we look back on the fulfilled promise, not to be motivated by the law and our transgression or perfection of it, but because God kept his promise we are blessed.

Throughout the letter to these Galatian churches Paul has taught the decisiveness of the gospel. He even opens with **Christ who gave himself for our sins to rescue us from this present evil age.**

The law does not bring righteousness, it brings a curse. The law is a side road that points us to the promise God gave Abraham. The promise God gave was not the law which came 430 years after the promise but it was fulfilled in Christ! The law was intended to point people back to the promises until the promise was realized.

We are not to play the Pharisee nor the Sadducee parsing the law to make everything black and white! Your mission in life is NOT to live out the law every day! The mission is to believe God!

Friends no matter your position before God, believe him. Live by faith in the gospel of Jesus Christ every day because the law was added until Christ!

This means the law is inferior to the promise and to prove this inferiority Paul adds, **and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.**

This is one big problem passage! There are many interpretations, several of which are scholarly and thought through. We don't have time to look at them all, I direct you to [studylight.org](http://studylight.org) and to their commentators to see the various views on this passage.

This is my understanding of Paul's words. It is a little deep. Hang with me, God's word is profitable for deep study.

Let me ask you, what does the scriptures say ...

Which is better, the law or promise? Promise!

Which came first, law or promise? Promise!

Which results in justification, righteousness, Holy Spirit, redemption, & inheritance? Promise!

The statement about the giving of the law I believe deals with the superiority of the promise over the law. In other words, the promise of faith is better because it is directly from God's mouth, given by God, implemented by God, and mediated by God through Christ.

These words in Galatians 3:19 speak about the giving and mediation of the law which I believe Paul says comes through creatures not God himself.

The Hebrew text of Exodus 19 contains the account of the giving of the law. **It does not contain any references to angels** but it does describe Mount Sinia as surrounded by thunder, lightning, a thick cloud, and a billow of fire. Later, in the OT texts translated into the Septuagint, Duet 33:2 and Ps. 68:18, interpret these natural phenomena's to mean a large number of angels, the fiery hosts of heaven, accompanied God in his giving of the law at Sinai. This tradition is confirmed in Acts 7:38, 53 & Hebrews 2:2.

Paul accepts this tradition, and we can rightly say it is true because multiple prophets record it. However, Paul's purpose here in Galatians is not to lift up the giving of the law by its association with angels but rather to indicate the inferior giving of the law through creature mediation.

**Paul does not mean angels good or bad, are the source of the law,** God is the source. The angels are the mediating participants during the giving of the law.

Furthermore they did not give it to the recipient nation but to a mediator, Moses, who received the law and was a go between God and the people.

Verse 20 is debated whether the mediator is Christ or Moses. I believe Paul's context dictates we presume it is Moses. I'm not dying on a hill for this belief but Moses performs this function for Paul in 2 Cor. 3 and in Heb. 3. Context also assumes it to be Moses.

The point of Paul then is the law came through mediators and givers of creation not from almighty God himself. The Promise on the other hand was given to Abraham came directly from God, AND this is why he includes the Shema "God is one."

God is one, and his promise in every way is superior to his law. His promise came through Jesus Christ, God, the one and only God, came himself. As it is written in **2 Corinthians 1, "all the promises of God find there yes in him. That is why it is through Him we utter Amen to God for His glory."**

The promise, beginning to end, is God's work.

The law, is from God, but even in it's giving is purposed to point us toward the works of God through faith in his promise.

WOW!!! I know that was deep, and I hope you followed that because this has been Paul's point, Faith is the goal not obedience to the law!

Why the law? Because the law makes us realize our need to believe the promise of God in Christ. Once again the ultimate goal is living by faith in the son of God who loved me and gave himself for me.

What is your view of God's law? When you read the 10 commandments do you see how desperately you need God's promises to be true or do you read those thinking, I'm not so bad?

If we understand the law as Jesus taught them, those 10 commandments are completely condemning. Every one of those points out the wickedness of the heart.

We all have idols we worship above God or on the same level of God. If not physical idols we have them in the heart.

We all have a heart that gets angry, lusts, is jealous, dishonors, is deceitful, mocks, and so much more. God's law, even the 10 commandments condemn us and curse us.

When you read them you should think, I have so completely unrighteous and unworthy of God's wishes. I am a transgressor!

And then by faith you claim 1 John "if we confess our sin, God is faithful and just to forgive our sin, and to cleanse us from ALL unrighteousness."

This is faith in the promise. This is what God is trying to get us to understand. Go to God in faith. Confess to God your faith. Repent of transgression because there is hope, healing, grace, righteousness found only in faith.

This week, use your knowledge of the law to realize just how wicked you are. Seriously, this week I want you to see how often you miss God's mark. Maybe keep a journal, a memorial, something that identifies your acknowledgement of your sinfulness. Thoughts, actions, attitudes however you've broken the God's law and then bring that with you next week.