

Jesus Bore My Curse

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[0 : 00] Father, sometimes your word is very shocking to our Canadian, to our Ottawa ears, and we don't quite know what to do with it. It's just so unexpected and shocking.

We ask, Father, that you grant us a deep remembrance of Jesus Christ and him crucified and your great love for us, that we would have patience with your word, willing to learn from it, even when it seems to be most shocking and most offensive to us.

And we thank and praise you, Father, that every word that comes to us from you is good, is just, is true, is loving, is merciful and kind. So, Father, grip us with the gospel, pour out the Holy Spirit upon us, and lead us and guide us into all truth as we think and read upon your word.

And this we ask in the name of Jesus, your Son and our Savior. Amen. Please be seated. Some of you might be wondering why I prayed something like that.

One of the things which is a very common phrase in movies and TV nowadays is when they say, it's going to be biblical. And when they say, it's going to be biblical, you know that what's going to happen is there's going to be noise and shouting and anger and explosions and death, and it's just going to be biblical.

[1 : 24] The text that I'm going to be preaching on today would be one of those texts that if they heard it, they'd say, yep, it's going to be biblical. That's why we use this phrase. By the way, it's not normally a compliment in a movie when they say it's going to be biblical.

It's a bad thing. So if you take your Bibles and turn in them to Galatians chapter 3, verses 10 to 14, Galatians 3, 10 to 14, I'm going to read the text again.

And those of you who didn't maybe notice it when Amy was reading the text, I think you'll see what I mean, that the text is very shocking. And here's how it goes. For all who rely, and I'll explain, those of you who aren't familiar with it, I'll explain what these different bits and pieces mean.

But I want you to hear the shocking bit if you didn't notice it before. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse. What? Under a curse.

For it is written, and now Paul quotes the Old Testament, cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them. Now you might wonder if that's just a bit of a, like, woo, did that sort of slip by the editor.

[2 : 33] But look what it goes on to say, verse 11. Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith. And now we start to feel a little bit, okay, a little bit more calm.

But then verse 12, it says, but the law is not of faith, rather the one who does them shall live by them. And that's a bit confusing. And then we get twice, or is it even three times?

Three times in one verse, verse 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.

So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith. So in this one verse, the key verse, verse 13, three times it refers to curses after it refers to it as well in verse 10.

So what on earth is going on? You could just well imagine what it would be like if one of you had to, you had a very, very nice co-worker or your neighbor, and they happened to come across this text, or they asked you to explain it, and you'd go, ab-da-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba-ba.

[3 : 50] That's probably what you would do. And you'd feel a little bit uncomfortable, and you'd say, let me show you John 3.16. Why don't we talk about that instead? So what's going on? So to understand what's going on, I'm going to tell you a story.

And I think, once I've told the story, and I show you how it's connected, I think you'll have a bit of a sense about what's going on here in the Bible when it refers to God cursing.

Imagine a couple, and they're both working class, and their parents have worked very hard all their life, and they, like many of us, they shop at Walmart.

Walmart. They don't shop at Nordstrom's. They shop at Walmart because that's what they can afford, and they live paycheck to paycheck. And a couple from a set of parents like that, they fall in love and they marry.

And they also are the type of couple who shop at Nordstrom's, not at Nordstrom's, that shop at Walmart and live from paycheck to paycheck. But they love each other, and they start to work very, very, very hard. And as they work very hard, in fact, he might work two jobs and she might work two jobs, and they really work very hard.

[4 : 56] They're very careful with their money. And after they've been careful with their money, they save up enough money to start their own little business. And they work very, very hard in their business, not only working the business, but another job on the side.

And after a period of time, they're actually able, their business starts to take off and take off and take off. And somewhere during this whole process, they have a daughter whom they love very, very, very much.

It was a huge answer to prayer for them to be given the gift of this beautiful little girl. And they work hard and hard and hard. They've now become, by the time their daughter is about to turn 18, they've actually become very successful financially, and they've become quite comfortable financially.

So in the spring, whenever it's time, whenever it is time to apply to university, their daughter is very, very, very bright, does very well in school. So they encourage their daughter to apply to lots of different universities.

And they've heard about this very prestigious university in the United States, and they say, you should apply to that. You know, you're really smart. I think you could get into that prestigious university. And she says to them, well, you see how much money it costs to go to that school?

[5 : 58] And they say, no, just apply. So she applies to all the different universities, and she gets accepted in every one of the universities, including the very prestigious one in the United States. So when it comes time for her to send in her acceptances, she said, I've decided I'm going to send, I'm going to go to Ottawa U.

Because it's, I can live at home, and I can be with you. And the parents say, honey, we love you so much. We love you so much, and we just want to bless you.

And we would love it if you lived at home with us and went to Ottawa U. But we want to bless you. So here's what we're going to do with you. We've talked about it, and we have the money for it.

We'd like you to go to that prestigious university in the United States. And here's what we're going to do. Year by year, we'll pay the full tuition. Not a loan. We'll pay the full tuition.

And because we want to bless you, we want to give you that opportunity to go to a university like that, to have those professors, those types of experiences. We want to really bless you to be able to do that. So we're quite happy to do it.

[7 : 03] And here's what else we'd like to do, because we only want to bless you, because we love you so much. Love you so much. We'd really like it if, rather than living in residence, you have a two-bedroom apartment.

You'll have to find a good roommate. We'll sign the lease. And here's what we'd like to do, once again, because one of the things that we found that's really blessed us, it's a blessing to work.

It's a blessing to have to be disciplined about work and managing your money. So what we'd like to do is this. We'd like it that when you move to this city, that as soon as you possibly can, you find a job.

We only want you to work four or five hours a week. And we'll set up a joint bank account between you and us. And what we'll do is this. Every time your paycheck goes in, for every dollar that goes into your bank account, as long as you're only working no more than five hours a week, for every dollar that you put in, we'll put in four dollars.

Because we would just love you to have this experience of going to that school, having the apartment, and it's a blessing to work. It's a blessing to work. And we just want to bless you.

[8 : 10] We just love you so much. But there's a few conditions, honey. Because we know that sometimes things can go off the rail. If it turns out that you start spending, you don't spend your time studying, your marks go way down, there's going to be some consequences to you.

Like, if you just fail out, we're not going to do it for the second year. Like, you've got to work hard. And if something goes on and you start not working or whatever, we're not going to just cut you off and put you on the street.

But rather than four dollars, it might just be two dollars or a dollar. Because you need to work. And if other things go on and just, you know, there'll be some consequences.

But we love you. We trust you. We want to just bless you because we love you so much. Now, I can tell you that's not what my parents said to me. And I wish Louise and I had the money that we could have said that to our kids.

But we didn't. Don't. Some of you who maybe are still in high school are thinking, maybe I should tell my parents to listen to a tape of this sermon to give them some ideas as to how they should handle things in the future.

[9 : 14] But here's the point. Understanding this story, and you can see how much the parents love the daughter and how wise they are in terms of blessing her to the utmost. Because it's actually more of a blessing to make her work a little bit and be disciplined than just to give her an American Express, whatever the best American Express card is, and said, just go crazy.

That's not actually as loving as making them work a little bit. So if you're mindful of that, to understand the biblical teaching of blessing, I'd like you to turn in your Bibles to Deuteronomy chapter 30.

Deuteronomy chapter 30. And we're going to look at verses 11 to 19. Deuteronomy chapter 30, verses 11 to 19. Now, when I was reading that text that I'm going to preach on in a moment, two of the times there's four Bible verses quoted.

First, they quote Deuteronomy. Then I think it's they quote Habakkuk. Then they quote Leviticus. And then they quote Deuteronomy again. And in both of the Deuteronomy quotes, it comes in a section of the book of Deuteronomy.

And the two verses we're going to read in a moment are the conclusion of the whole section that the verses are found in. And these two verses perfectly capture the biblical understanding of blessing and curses.

[10 : 32] And just to get the context, you remember that God has called his people to himself. He's done a series of miracles to bring the nation of Israel out of bondage and slavery into Egypt, into the promised land.

He does all these miracles, including even parting the Red Sea. They come to the edge of the promised land. They don't trust him. They don't trust God. So they turn away. And so God punishes them that they have to wander in the wilderness for 40 years.

And what happens is the book of Deuteronomy is written by Moses at the end of the time of wandering in the wilderness. And they're once again, they're just on the edge. Like if this is the promised land right there with the pews that the seats are there right here, they can see the promised land.

And in Deuteronomy, the whole covenant with God is reminded. And part of it that goes from the seven or eight chapters before this, and this is the conclusion of them, is they actually have a ceremony to once again be reminded of the covenant.

And the heart of the covenant is all the things that God's going to do to bless them. He's provided for them. He brought them out of Egypt. He's provided for them in the wilderness. He's going to bring them into the promised land.

[11 : 42] He promises that he'll defeat their enemies. He'll give them the land. If they keep his law, the wheat will grow, the vines will grow, the figs will grow, everything will go, everything will flourish and grow.

But there's also warnings. If you go after other gods, this is going to happen. Other gods, this is going to happen. And this is the conclusion of this. Here's how it goes.

Deuteronomy 30 verses 19 and 20. This is Moses speaking on behalf of God. I call heaven and earth to witness against you today. I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse.

Therefore, choose life. Choose life that you and your offspring may live, loving the Lord your God, obeying his voice and holding fast to him.

For he is your life and length of days that you may dwell in the land that the Lord swore to your fathers, to Abraham, to Isaac and to Jacob to give them. And I can tell you that if you go back to the original language, if you look at verse 19 and you go to the original language, I call heaven and earth.

[12:50] I call heaven and earth to witness against you today that I have set before you life and death, blessing and curse. That in the original language, the language is made to emphasize blessing.

I give you blessing. I give you life. I give you blessing and curse. I give you life and death. It's still said, but it's very obvious in the original language that what God wants to do is bless. What he wants to do is life. Now, think then back to the whole problem.

If you could put up the first point, Andrew, that would be great. In the world, curses flow from hatred and a lust for power. That's why we're so shocked when we see the word curse in the New Testament or in the Old Testament, because that's how curses work in this world.

What you really have, and it's not just in Angola, it's here, as I'll talk about more later on, but when I was in Angola with the missionaries, many of the people who, native Angolans, still believed in the power of witch doctors and the power of curses.

[14:01] And so what would happen in there is, of course, in a sense, it was amoral. And to be amoral when you should be moral is to be immoral. And so it's basically just an amoral thing that I'm the witch doctor and Amy comes to me and she's really mad at Matt, and so she gives me the money or whatever, and I put a curse on Matt.

I don't even inquire whether Amy's in the right or in the wrong. Maybe Matt's a saint and Amy's really, really bad, but Amy gives me the money and Matt doesn't. So I listen to Amy and I curse Matt.

And so that's how it works in the world. When we hear the word curse, we expect that it's coming out of amoral, like that morality doesn't come into it all. It's all just about hatred and lust for power. Because if you actually had the power to curse a person who doesn't deserve it and it actually worked, that's hatred, right? And so the curse comes out of an amoral, immoral world filled with hatred and a lust for power.

And what does a curse do? A curse is something that will weaken or diminish or frustrate you. That's what a curse does. It will weaken, in theory, it'll weaken, it will diminish or it will frustrate you.

[15:14] Now, Andrew, if you could put up the next point. For the triune God, his curse is spoken out of his great, great love for you and his desire to bless you.

For the triune God, his curse is spoken out of his great, great love for you and his desire to bless you. Think about the parents with the young girl. That gives it to you understand.

What do the parents say? The parents say, we want to bless you. We want to bless you so much. I don't know. Let's pick it Princeton. I have no idea how much money it costs to go to Princeton for a year in U.S. dollars. Let's say it's \$55,000 U.S.

I don't know. What is that? Like 85,000 Canadian? And they say, we want to bless you. We'll cover the \$85,000 tuition. We'll give you the apartment. We'll put our name on the lease so you're never thrown out on the street.

And for every dollar you make, we're going to give you \$4. And we're going to bless you because it's a blessing to work. It's a blessing to learn discipline. These are all blessings. But what do they say?

[16:14] If we start to look and there's no money going into your bank account and we call you, we'll ask you. You know, if you're in some trouble, if it turns out there's way more work and you need a couple of weeks off of work, just call us.

That's the equivalent of prayer. Call us and we'll make a special arrangement. Be honest and humble to us and we'll make a special arrangement with you. Why? Because we love you and we want to bless you.

But if it turns out that the girl is not studying and her marks are going down and she's not working, what do the parents say? We're going to do something to frustrate, diminish and weaken you.

We won't put \$4 and it might only be \$1. It might be no dollars. We'll just cover the rent and we'll give you no money. Why do they do that? Because they hate her? No. Because they love her.

Is it because they want to hurt her? No. What do they want to do? They want to bless her. And so what do they do? They do things to diminish, weaken and frustrate her in the hope that she will turn, return to her senses, repent and get back on track.

[17:24] And that's what God does for you and for me. That is the context of the curses.

If you drink excessive alcohol, it ruins your mental capacities, it ruins your liver, it ruins your life, it ruins your job prospects, it frustrates, weakens and diminishes you.

Why? God desires you stop drinking. So now let's look at the text.

And if you turn back to Galatians chapter 3 verses 10 to 14, you're going to see that God in his word does three remarkable things. The first one is very shocking. He warns you against religion and spirituality.

The second thing is he explains the glory of the gospel. And the third thing, he gives a special word of comfort for those of us who are cursed or who think we are cursed.

[18 : 26] He's going to do three things. He's going to warn us about religion and spirituality for our good. He's going to explain the glory of the gospel. And third, he's going to give a special word of comfort for those of us who think that we might be cursed.

So let's see what happens. Go back to Galatians chapter 3 verses 10 to 14. It begins like this. For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse, for it is written, Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the book of the law and do them.

Now, this is very, very shocking. First of all, when it says the book of the law and do everything in them, there's a technical meaning to it.

But here's a better way to understand it if you want to try to explain this to somebody. You do get in that situation where one of your neighbors or your co-worker asks you about it. We're all used to using a phrase like if I said to you, you know, we have a big problem right now going on in Canada. It's the undue influence of Bay Street. You know I'm not just referring to a street in Toronto. Bay Street is a way to refer to capitalism. It's a way to refer to banks and insurance companies and interest rates and all of the aspects of capitalism and private enterprise.

[19 : 41] And I just use that word Bay Street or Wall Street. If I use Hollywood, I'm talking about a whole range of big things. And so what you can understand is whenever you see the book of the law and works, it's like talking about Wall Street only in a different way.

What it's talking about is any attempt, whether it's one of the ancient faiths, whether it's a boutique or curated personal faith, or whether it's even using Christianity but not using Christianity in the gospel sense but in a religious sense or spiritual sense but not the gospel sense.

It's anything that thinks that if you do certain things and then you speak certain ways, you're going to get the right type of accomplishment in terms of a connection with God.

And that's what it means. Okay? And part of the reason which is very shocking about this text, if you just think, and this was written, by the way, there are many, many parts of the world that still believe in curses in a literal sense.

And I'm only partially familiar with it, but if you're a little bit familiar with amulets and stuff like that, you'll be surprised how many people wear things to ward off the evil eye and other types of things.

[20 : 50] Like, you'll be surprised how much it is. It's a very major feature of Islam is a concern with curses. But it's also present in Buddhism, Hinduism, and all native spiritualities and paganism, a concern, and of course all with Wicca and all of the whole realm of magic.

It's an ongoing thing to be concerned about these types of things. And normally in context where there's a concern about this, if you think you're under a curse, what do you do? Well, you try to be good is one of the things you try to do.

You try to become more religious and spiritual as a way of dealing with it. But if you could put up the third point, Andrew, that would be very handy. Here's the shocking thing, is that the Bible is saying that to try to do that, to try to do religion, to try to do spirituality, is actually to be under a curse.

And here's the thing, I'll explain it more later on. The Bible warns you that pursuing religion or spirituality is like pedaling down the hill, thinking it is the way to get to the top of the hill.

I'll show you why I mean that in a moment. So just to make it clear, it would be as if we use Matt and Amy again, but this time we'll make sure that Amy's the good person, not the bad person.

[22 : 01] And so Amy takes Matt up to her favorite place in the Rockies, where the road is going up the hills and over the Rockies. And she knows the biggest height that you go, the longest up you have to go to get to the top.

And she says, you know, honey, I'm going to drop you off two-thirds from the top. I'm going to give you a bike. And you can bike the rest of the way, because you've always wanted to bike in the Rockies. You can't bike this long hill.

Just bike this last little third. I'll be at the top. I'm going to have a thermos of coffee. I'm going to have a sports drink. I'm going to have a homemade scone, blueberries, and white chocolate.

I have no idea if he likes that, by the way. Anyway, and so she drops him off. He gets on his bike. She goes up to the top of the hill. She looks in her rearview mirror, and Matt immediately starts pedaling downhill.

She's going, what? How is going downhill going to get you to the top of the hill? Every second she's pedaling, like he's really good.

[22 : 55] Look how fast he's going, but he's going the wrong way. He's getting farther away from the top of the hill, where the flask of dark roast coffee, the energy cold energy drink, and the homemade scones are.

He's going the opposite way from where he has to be. And what Paul is saying, what the Bible reveals, is that the more religious and spiritual you become, tragically, you're actually becoming farther away.

You're going to get more under the consequences of God's judgment because you're actually going farther away from God. Now, that will become clear in the other verses. Look at verse 12. Verse 12, it says, Now, it is evident that no one is justified, and justified here means made right with God, by the law, by your efforts, by religion, by spirituality.

Why? Because there's a Bible text in Habakkuk that says, the righteous shall live by faith. In other words, it's by faith, by trusting God, that he makes you right. In other words, God provides all these messages in the Torah, the Tanakh, what our Jewish friends call the Tanakh.

It's all there. It's all there. But it's only Jesus that makes everything clear, brings everything out so that you go, Ah! Ah! That's how it all goes together.

[24 : 10] And then, just to make it clear, in other words, it's not just bad news. Doing religion and spirituality is going to leave you cursed. Why? Because God wants to bless you. And so there's this other text that there is going to be a way to be made right with God where you can be blessed, but it's going to be by faith.

And then in verse 12, it says this, But the law, remember, doing good things, religious things, spiritual things, is not of faith. Because why? It's all about human effort.

It's all about the effort of the individual, the family, the tribe, the institution. And that's what it means by, the one who does them shall live by them. In other words, once you begin pedaling downhill, you're committed to pedaling downhill.

That's the way you're living. That's the way you're directed. And then this shocking piece of news. Christ, verse 13, Christ redeemed us, rescues us, delivers us from slavery.

That's what redeemed means, to be bought, delivered, freed from slavery. Christ redeems us from slavery, from the curse of the law. Why? How?

[25 : 09] By becoming a curse for us. It is written, Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree, who is crucified.

So that in Christ Jesus, the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. If you could put up the next point, Andrew.

So what the Bible is saying here is that the Bible warns you, sorry, the triune God broke into the real world to do for you what you could never do for yourself.

And this is offered to you as an unmerited and humbling gift. The triune God broke into history, into the real world, the world of armies, the world of governments, the world of laws, the world of food, the world of sweat, of sickness, of marriage, of children, the real world to do for you and for me what you and I could never do for ourselves.

And this is offered to you as an unmerited and humbling gift. And I say it's the triune God who breaks in. Why? Because the Father speaks into the world. Why? Because Jesus walked in the world.

[26 : 21] He lives this life. He dies this death. He rises from the dead. The Holy Spirit breaks into the world to bring you to Jesus, to bring you to the Scriptures. It's the triune God, the full Godhead acting together to do something for us that we could never, ever, ever do for ourselves.

The next point. Jesus offers to trade places with you on him, all that shames, all that diminishes, and all that punishes you, and all that you have done to deserve that shame, diminishment, and punishment, all on him.

And he offers to you that on you, his sinless, loving, sacrificial, risen life of union with the living God. That is what the text is saying. Jesus offers to trade places with you. He's already done it. Will you accept what he has already done for you?

You do not have to say, Jesus, could you please do this sometime for me in the future? Because he's already done it for you right now. It's a gift waiting for you to receive.

[27 : 40] And what that gift is, is on him all that shames you, all that diminishes you, all that punishes you, and all that you have done to deserve that shame, diminishment, punishment, and weakness, and punishment is laid on him.

And he offers you his sinless, loving, sacrificial, risen life of perfect union with the living God. You see, the judgment and the curse itself is on Jesus.

Could you put up the first image, Andrew? Remember I said to you that the Bible warns you about pursuing religion or spirituality? It says that it's like pedaling downhill, thinking it is the way to the top of the hill.

Here's the way of religion and spirituality, right? It doesn't matter if it's Islam. It doesn't matter if it's forms of Christianity. It doesn't matter if it's Buddhism.

It doesn't matter if it's a boutique spirituality, a curated spirituality of your own. You know, maybe if it's a curated spirituality, then you become vegan. That's your first step of being good.

[28 : 54] You vote green. That's the next step of being good. And then maybe you go to an Earth Day or some other type of thing where you call down the moon, and the point is that you do the good things, and then you start to connect with God, and then you have union with God.

And that's how it works. Maybe if it's a Roman Catholic, you go to confession. You start going to Mass on a regular basis. And then while you're there, you shoot up the odd little phrase to God. And then after that, maybe God's going to accept you for himself. So it's all, and people will say it in the restaurants or in the bars or in the coffee shops. You know, I started to do a few good things, and I say, I throw up the few little shots of conversation with the big guy upstairs or the big gals upstairs or the big it all around.

And then eventually I'm going to be at union with him. And that's the way you work. You be good. You connect. You have union. If you could put up the next image.

But what does the gospel tell you? The gospel goes the opposite direction. Look what it does. How do you become? How does it begin? It becomes. How does it begin?

[30 : 00] Here's how it would begin in the Old Testament. You're trying to fulfill the law. You're trying to say the prayers. You're hoping and hoping and hoping. But every time you try to do this, what is it that irreligious people say about religious people?

What are the many things they say about us? Religious people? They think their poop smells better than other people. They think they're really good, but they're not really good.

They think their tribe is better than other tribes. That's why there's so much violence, and that's why there's so much hatred. They're just doing all of this thing to please themselves. And look at all the ways it's bending them out of shape.

And that's what happens. In the Old Testament, the hope of God is you try to do this. You try to do this. You try to do this. But you realize as you do it that your heart is still not right with God, that you still can't do all of the things you have to do.

And the hope of the Bible is that rather than doing this and doing this and doing this and getting farther away from God, that the time comes that you say, God. Have mercy on me.

[31 : 04] I can't do it. It doesn't work. Have mercy. You're no longer doing it on your own power, away from God, thinking you're meeting God.

But you come and you just say, Have mercy. Have mercy. And God says, I have good news. The curse has laid on the Lamb of God.

The curse has been laid on Jesus. And his perfect fellowship with me is offered to you. Put your hand in his. Reach out and have mercy. Father, I can do nothing.

I have nothing in my hand to bring. All I can do is reach it out to you. And Jesus takes it. And there's this great exchange. And now you have union with God. And now that you have union with God, you can talk to him as your father in heaven and the power of the Holy Spirit.

And now you have a capability and an understanding of why it is that you should forgive. Or why that try to forgive. Or try to be more generous financially.

[32 : 06] Or have more of a heart for poor people. And not be as judgmental and ignoring of them. And be concerned that there's justice in government. And now all of a sudden, because you're made right with God and you can start to talk to him as your heavenly father.

And living out of this great gift starts to become more obvious and more powerful. See? If you do in religion, you're pedaling down the hill away from God.

Thinking you're very self-righteous and holy. And the time comes you need to throw up your arms and say, Have mercy upon me. Just in closing, Remember I said that this text is a warning against religion and spirituality.

And it's a proclamation of the greatness of the gospel. But it's also, And just in closing, for those of us who think we are cursed. And I'm conscious that when I speak, I'm not just speaking to you, but I'm also speaking, this service is taped.

And so it'll be available as a podcast. I'm speaking to people who will listen to it. And I've preached the same sermon on the online service. And so those who will watch the online service.

[33 : 18] And so it might very well be that some of you here, this text is not an abstract text, but a very personal text, because there might be people here who think you're cursed. Or there might be people listening to this who think you're under a curse.

And there's two other types of secular forms of curses. One of the secular forms of curses is that there are probably people here, or probably people who are listening to this, who think that there is something fundamentally broken and doomed about you because of something you did or failed to do.

I remember years ago counseling a young fellow, now at that point in time he was around 40, who the love of his life, he chose his career over loving her and marrying her.

And this is now 15 years later, and he realized that he had missed his one, he thought in his eye he'd missed a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, that everything in his values were wrong.

And even though outwardly successful, inwardly he was profoundly beating himself up, that by his action, there was now something fundamentally wrong and broken about him that could never be redeemed.

[34 : 34] And maybe it's because you've had an abortion, maybe it's because of an affair, maybe it's because you spent time in jail, maybe it's because of some secret thing of shame that you have done that you cannot even bear to tell another person about, some secret activity that you have that has just broken you, maybe one that you cannot stop, and you feel completely and utterly broken and misshapen and doomed.

And there's others of us who have that same experience of feeling broken and shamed and doomed, not necessarily because of something you have done, but because of something that has been done to you.

Maybe it's still overcoming the problem of your parents' divorce. Maybe it's the words that your mom or your dad or your aunt or your uncle or your grandfather or your brother or sister constantly spoke into you for year after year after year, that you are no good, that you are bad, that there is something wrong with you, that you will never be a success, that you will never be loved, nobody will ever love you, there's something dirty about you.

And there are people in our culture, those of us here listening to this, who have been cursed in a secular way. And if that is one of you, Galatians 3 verses 13 and 14 is a verse that you should meditate, memorize and meditate upon and pray into every day.

Because what does it say? If you could put up the final point, Andrew, in Christ Jesus, I pronounce this not because I have anything special. I am not a shaman. I am merely an ordinary human being.

[36 : 06] I am a beggar who has met Jesus and heard the gospel. And I, a beggar, share with you, a beggar, that in Christ Jesus, every curse against you is swallowed up in life and blessing that is real today and continuous into eternity.

Every curse in Christ Jesus against you is swallowed up in life and blessing. It is real today and continues into eternity and cannot be removed.

That is what the Bible tells you. You see, it is not the case that God hated you until Jesus died on the cross for you.

What is the case? From all eternity, the Father, the Son, the Holy Spirit has loved you and wanted to bless you and has watched with tears as you turn from Him.

and God provides the means to restore and return you to the blessing He has always desired to bestow upon you that can begin today and as you're gripped by the gospel, as it becomes more real to your heart and your affections, can grow into all eternity and will grow into all eternity.

[37 : 34] I invite you to stand and we're going to pray. If you can't stand, you don't have to, but if you can stand, let's just stand, change the position to pray. And after this, if Daniel's around, he's

going to come up and lead the intercessions.

Let's pray. Father, you know our hearts and you know those of us in this room who either believe we have been cursed and have been living out of that or in a magical sense or are cursed in one of these two different secular ways.

Father, you know those of us who deeply struggle with this. And so, Father, we thank you for the words of the scripture and the promise of Jesus. We thank you, Father, for this wonderful text that at first was a shock and offensive to us, but now we see is so precious.

But now we see, your blessing, the Holy Spirit himself indwelling us to be born again and made alive by you. Father, we ask for those of us who struggle with this that you would bring the great truth of the gospel home very deeply to us today and every day as we struggle to grow out of this sense and grow into the gospel and grow more and more to see ourselves in the world and all around us in light of Jesus and who he is and what he has done for us.

And we thank you, Father, that we don't have to do this just by our own memory, but that the Holy Spirit is in our lives to move us in this direction and that Jesus is with us to walk with us, to walk with us in the direction of blessing.

[39 : 10] Father, we thank you for this. And if there are any here, Father, who have not yet given their lives to Jesus, we ask that, Father, that this would be the time that they call out to you for mercy and we know and we thank you that you will receive them and take them.

And we ask, Father, that you grant us a great compassion for those around us that we can see live under a curse, that you would help us to pray with compassion for them.

And, Father, in our day-to-day lives, help us to be people not who curse but who bless. Who bless in the name of Jesus. Father, make us a blessing. All these things we ask in the name of Jesus and all God's people said, Amen.