

He became a curse for me

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[0 : 0 0] I was married 10 years, and I had been a Christian for a lot more than 10 years, before I came to the stark realization that I basically, in my self-understanding and my self-talk, I basically saw myself as doomed. That the way I talked to myself and understood myself, I mean, I knew Bible passages, and I grew up in a church where they would have said, I got the joy, joy, joy, joy down in my heart. There you go. You grew up in the same type of church.

And I grew up in a church like that, and I knew that, and I would have sort of denied that I had these types of basic self-talk and feeling, but I was married 10 years. I'd been a Christian for a long time. I'd been a pastor for whatever, seven or eight years or five, six, seven years, before it started to come home to me in a very, very powerful way, that at the very center of who I was and how I saw myself, how I talked to myself, my fundamental beliefs were that if people got to know me more, they would like me less. And the things that I got involved in wouldn't work out, that things would fail. Whatever I get involved with, it's going to fail. And I had a range of views all connected to that, that nobody would really care for me as I really was when they saw me deep down.

You know, in a sense, using biblical language, I saw myself as cursed. I saw myself as cursed. And this Bible text that we're going to look at today, on one hand, it just seems odd.

You know, talking about Abraham and all these rhetorical questions and being cursed, and cursed is the one who hangs on a tree. On one hand, when we're first listening to it, it sounds a bit confusing. It sounds just sort of odd. But the fact of the matter is that many of us probably here in this room and many of the people that we meet, and in fact, I would say that at some level, every human being has some basic sense of being cursed. But for some of us, it might be a hidden thing. It might only come up in certain contexts. But for many of us, it's actually a very, very powerful daily reality. And the Bible has some very powerful things to say to this situation. So it'd be a great help to me if you took out your Bibles and turned in your Bibles to Galatians chapter 3. Galatians chapter 3. Excuse me, I have a bit of a frog in my throat. Galatians chapter 3, verse 1. And it actually sort of, interestingly enough, there's a bit of a running theme here about curses in these 14 verses, because it actually begins with Paul. I mean, on one hand, it's a rhetorical gesture, but he's trying to make a bit of a point to them. Those of you who haven't been here, when you're going through the book of Galatians, Galatia is a church in what we now call South Turkey, so sort of South Middle Turkey. And it hasn't been a church for very long. Most of the people in the church are pagans who've become Christians. There's some Jewish people who've become completed Jews, or we would call them Messianic Jews or completed Jews. They've also become Christians. And there's been a problem in the church of what Paul calls false brothers. believers, and he's trying to deal with it. And look how it begins. And, you know, literally it says, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? Or who has cast a spell on you? Would be another completely valid way to translate it. Or another valid way to translate it would be, say, who has done the evil eye on you? Now, just, you know, before we go anything further, I'm going to talk a little bit about how many people, I think anybody who struggles with anxiety, anybody who struggles with people pleasing, anybody who struggles with alcoholism or drug issues or pornography issues, at a very deep level, we're struggling with a sense of being doomed. And I'm going to mainly be using examples around that from at a more sense of psychological level. But there are many people in our culture who basically worry that they've been cursed. And it's not just in our culture, but, you know, it's a major issue in Muslim cultures, in much of what we call the third world, is the belief that there really is the power of some people to cast a spell or give you the evil eye or do something to you that means that spiritual forces are now against you, causing you illness or failure in business or failure in life or failure in romance. It's in fact a very, very common and prevalent view that this means actually something quite literal. And I'm not going to talk about that as much, but all of the thing about

curses covers even that as well. If you're here and you worry that because of your your father or your mother having pronounced curses over you or your neighbor, this text is specifically for you. And Paul begins by saying, you know, has something gone on here? We're going to see that he doesn't believe it has real power. And it's partially he's trying to shock them into paying attention to what's going on. But for us, for some of us, it might have a very type of literal connotation. Oh, foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, cast a spell on you, given you the evil eye?

[5 : 41] It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. And as we're going to see in Jewish culture and in Roman culture, to be crucified was a type of a curse. Roman citizens couldn't be crucified. Had to be low status or no status individuals. And but but here just I want to think I've already started with a biographical moment about my feeling of always being doomed.

And if you could put up the first point, just after I came to this church, I was doing a Bible teaching time on Galatians. And as I was doing the Bible teaching time on Galatians, I realized I had to break with my Anglican culture about how sermons worked. Because, you know, I grew up in an evangelical background, have lots of evangelical experience. But in Anglican churches in the Diocese of Ottawa, you know, basically the sermon is a 12 minute of insight of nice thoughts. And but what Paul is saying here is when it was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified, he's actually in in the original language, it's very clear that what he said is that when he came to church every Sunday, what he did was hammer away at the fact that Jesus Christ had died upon the cross.

And everything was connected to Jesus dying on the cross. And so here's my first point, please pray that at Messiah we will preach Jesus Christ crucified in such a way that God touches people's hearts.

Like if you could pray for that, that would be really good. That we always go back to the cross. We always go back to what Jesus has done for us on the cross. And and that's what Paul is saying. That's he said, how did I work when I came amongst you? Every time I taught, I talked about Jesus dying on the cross for you. In fact, he almost puts it as if he had a big billboard and he spoke in front of the billboard. And on the back of the billboard was a picture of Jesus dying on the cross with a big sign saying Jesus Christ crucified. That's how prominent it was for him. So please pray for me and for the church of the Messiah that that will be the case. But but back to the text, what Paul is going to do it because it's going to seem a little bit weird that all of a sudden he goes to a whole pile of questions. In fact, there's a basically a question every verse. And what Paul does is he goes back to their experience. He's just reminding them of how they came to faith and how they lived their faith before the false brothers came. And so he asked them a series of, in a sense, rhetorical questions. And here's the first one. Let me ask you only this. Verse two, did you receive the Holy

[8 : 38] Spirit by works of the law? In other words, by doing rituals, by keeping kosher or by hearing with faith? In other words, you heard about Jesus Christ crucified, that he died for you to be your savior, to make you right with God. That's why he died upon the cross was that he was in a sense, and they would have understood this language of sacrifice, that he was God's sacrifice to make you right with God, not just for the moment, but for the rest of your life. He makes you right with God. And what he's pointing to is, is that when a Christian, when a person puts their faith in Jesus, they, they hear the explanation of who Jesus is dying upon the cross and what he's accomplishing when he dies upon the cross, they hear this explanation and invitation. And they respond by putting their faith and trust in Jesus, that they believe that Jesus dying on the cross is God's means and power and provision to make a human being who has faith in him to be right with God forever. And they hear it, they hear the story. And when they hear, they trust. And one of the things that they do when they trust then is that not only are they changed, the text is going to talk about that in a moment, they're made right with God, but God also gives them the Holy Spirit. Every Christian, when they put their faith and trust in God, receives the Holy Spirit. Every Christian, no exception.

And he goes on with other questions. Are we so, verse three, are you so foolish having begun by the Holy Spirit? Are you now being perfected by the flesh, by your own human effort? Did you suffer so many things in vain? If indeed it was in vain, does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of law or by hearing with faith? This emphasis on hearing with faith. Now, here's another bit of a self-disclosure to you. So I'm working away on this sermon all week.

I'm reading the text every day. I'm thinking about it, you know, looking at different resources to help me understand what it says in the original language and in the context. And in the context, it's very clear and very obvious to them. Something very dramatic happened to all of them. To all of them, they went from maybe being unobservant or observant Jews to hearing about Jesus Christ crucified, trusting in him.

And in a sense, the Holy Spirit became so real to them that they started to live very different lives as the Holy Spirit kept bringing them back to Jesus and changing their lives. And for the pagans, some of them maybe worshipped the emperor's God. Others maybe worshipped many different gods. And they did all sorts of pagan sacrifices and pagan practices, but they hear about Jesus and they're starting to learn to stop doing all of those things. And the Holy Spirit became so real and powerful in their lives, it changed their lives. And Paul is just reminding them historically of their experience of what went on in their lives. He's reminding them of what happened to them in their day-to-day lives. And I'm reading this text and I'm trying to think about how to preach it to you.

[11 : 53] And it was at that moment, and this is another self-disclosure thing, was as if God spoke to me and said, George, how much are you dependent upon the Holy Spirit? Like with these rhetorical questions come to you, do you have this sense, George, of dependence upon the Holy Spirit and the need of the Holy Spirit to move? George, do you have this? Have you, George, slipped into just wanting to use your intellect and your experience, etc.? Have George... You see, the Bible is asking questions, and I was sitting there trying to think of how I could get you folks to understand that God's asking you a question, and God showed up and interrupted my sermon preparation and actually made me hear the question myself.

George, what about you? If you could put up the next slide. Many Christians, at a functional level, we act as if a Christian needs the Holy Spirit like a fish needs a bicycle.

I'm adapting a famous thing by, I think it was Germaine Greer, a feminist, who said, a woman needs a man like a fish needs a bicycle. It's a very funny line.

But you know, at a functional level, many of us act as if a Christian needs the Holy Spirit like a fish needs a bicycle. Like, we don't really need it. Like, we got the prayer book, we got our liturgy, we got our church council, we got our money, we got our degree, we got our this, we got our that. And when we're really stuck, we call out for help.

But fundamentally, we don't think we need the Holy Spirit's help to do our day. Maybe I'm the only one. But this text, by what, in a sense, you see, in a sense, the problem is that when, for many of us, when we read these rhetorical questions, they don't make any sense to us.

[13 : 52] And if they don't make any sense to us, it might be that at a functional level, we're slipping into merely trusting our mind, our willpower, our abilities, our genetics, and our connections.

So if you could put up the next slide. You know, please pray that we, as a congregation, please, please pray for me, please pray for yourself, that we will be so gripped by the gospel that we will live in dependence on the Holy Spirit's life-giving power.

In other words, pray that these rhetorical questions would grip you. And not just be an antiquarian, ancient thing that we have to try to get our minds around.

But that it would grip us. You know, Jesus says when he's in the upper room with his disciples, I think it's in John 16, and he knows he's going to die the next day on the cross.

And he's trying to get his disciples to understand and he says it's a good thing that I go away to the Father. He's talking about his crucifixion because in a sense he says if I don't die on the cross and rise from the grave the next day, you won't have the Holy Spirit.

[15 : 07] It's a good thing I'm going and you get the Holy Spirit. And for many of us, we just, we need to be gripped with this truth. So it's a bit of a long aside, but it's very interesting that it's just the other day I was talking to somebody just a couple of weeks ago I was talking to somebody and I had to say a couple of hard things to them.

And so I was thinking and praying about how I was going to say some challenging things to this person. And then I realized I realized that what I needed to do first, I wish I could do this all the time, but I realized what I needed to do first was just to fundamentally affirm them.

Because the fact is that what I wanted to say to them is I actually had a high regard for them and I had a high regard for their potential. And I had a bit of a feeling that not many people had ever talked about the high regard that they had for the person or their high potential.

And in fact, the difficult things I wanted to say to the person or the challenging things I wanted to say to the person was so that they could start to reach their God-given potential. And so I needed to

affirm them in some way.

And the Bible here is going to be doing a similar type of move actually. So it begins in verse 1 by Paul saying, like, have you guys come under a curse?

[16:34] Like, has somebody cast the evil eye over you? Like, what's going on? He asks them then, he reminds them of their experience. He reminds them of their experience of how they become Christians.

He reminds them of how the Holy Spirit is at work in their lives. He reminds them that they never kept kosher, but they received the Holy Spirit. They never followed all the Jewish festivals, but they received the Holy Spirit.

They never, you know, they never followed all the cleanliness laws and everything in the Old Testament, yet they received the Holy Spirit and they prayed and God did miracles to them and he's reminding them of all of these things.

And now that he's gone from their experience, he does something which, regrettably, in our church culture often seems like it's a sign that you're a dumb fundamentalist.

But really then, after he's talked about their experience, he in a sense says, and what does the Bible say? And what does the Bible say? And the first thing he's going to do, and we're going to look at in a moment, in what the Bible says, is the Bible communicates to him, he wants to communicate to them something very, very, very powerful about the fundamental reality of who they are now that they have given their lives to Jesus.

[17:52] And all of the talk about being cursed and being doomed only comes after he's assured them from the Bible. He's reminded them of Jesus and he's going to talk to them about Jesus in terms of opening the Bible to them and it's after that that he says the hard things to them.

If you could put up the next point, this would be very helpful. Here's the thing. Please pray that we will, as a church, will always ask, what does the Bible say? That's the apostolic question.

Jesus said it. The apostles say it. What does the Bible say? And Paul is going to go through a series of quotes that come from Deuteronomy, that come from Leviticus, that come from Habakkuk, that try to bring home who it is that Jesus is.

And he begins right away in verse 6. In my version of the Bible, it's made as if it's all part of one long sentence, but it's a different idea. So let's say verse 5 again. Does he who supplies the Holy Spirit to you and works miracles among you, do so by works of the law?

In other words, by your ability to keep kosher. And in our case, it's because your ability to go to church on time and your ability to dress well at church and the fact that you know that you can sing some praise choruses with your eyes closed because you know the words right and you know Christianese.

[19:11] And basically, you either live a moral life or you live a moral life where nobody knows all the bad things you're doing but looks like you're living a moral life. Is that how you live the Christian life or is it by hearing with faith?

And then he goes to the primary biblical example of hearing with faith. He goes in verse 6 to Abraham. And why is that? Just to remind you. Just who was Abraham?

When God calls Abraham, what was Abraham doing? When God calls Abraham, Abraham wasn't singing praise choruses by, you know, Tomlin. He wasn't keeping kosher. What was he doing? He was worshipping the moon.

He was a moon god worshiper. If you go back, you hunt around the Old Testament, Abraham was a moon god worshiper. And God said, Abraham, I want you to leave your family.

I want you to leave your friends. I want to leave your security. I want you to leave everything you know. And I want you to leave the moon god. And I want you to leave all the other gods that you worship. I am the god, the lord god of all the earth.

[20:18] And I want you to be mine. And if you believe what I say, and come, and do what I say, because you believe what I say. Well, what does it say here?

Look at this, verse 6. Just as Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Now, it's a very, very tight little phrase.

Notice the first thing here. It's not saying that he believed in God, right? Lots of people believe in God. The hard thing isn't believing, merely believing in God, but not only believing in God, but believing what God says.

Believing in what God says. Probably, I don't know what the statistics are, maybe 80, 90% of Canadians believe in God, but do we believe that when Jesus, just before he dies upon the cross, and knowing how shocking it's going to be, and he's trying to prepare his disciples for the fact that even though he's going to die the death of a slave, seemingly completely and utterly defeated, he's trying to tell them that and reminding them that on the third day he's going to rise from death, and in the context of his impending death by crucifixion, he says, I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father but by me. Do you believe that? Abraham didn't just believe, I mean, Abraham believed in God, sure, God, this God, that God, all sorts of gods, but it was that Abraham believed God when he said, leave your family, your worship, your friends, your power, leave all of that and come and follow me.

[22 : 07] And when Abraham believed what God said, and the word here counted as righteousness, righteousness, it's a term from accounting. And maybe the best analogy would be this.

I don't know how many of you, some of you here don't own homes, you'd like to own a home someday. And I know that when Louise and I were looking to buy our first house, one of the things we were trying to find is if there was somebody who would rent to own.

The way I understand rent to own would be this. You know, one of you folks have a townhouse or something and we're not sure if we're going to be able to buy the house or if we have the down payment.

But what we just begin is we begin the process of renting with you. In a rent to own situation, what you say is maybe a year or two into it, you'll count all those rent payments as if they had been mortgage payments.

You change the accounting term and understanding of it. And what the Bible here is saying is that God does something very interesting. If you go back and you read Genesis chapter 12 and you read Genesis chapter 15 and you read Genesis chapter 18 and what God is saying to Abraham, you see, on one hand, the rent to own thing is that you've just, you've changed, you know, now rather than just being rent, it's been mortgage payments which means now if the house was worth \$300,000, you've made some mortgage payments, it's now, you now only owe \$290,000 because you've been renting and now you switch all those rent payments to own payments.

[23 : 36] But it's still just money. But in this case, what it's saying is that God does this unbelievable act of grace because Abraham has no money, he has no credit, all he's been doing is worshipping the moon God.

But if Abraham not only believes God but believes in what God says and trusts what he says, God will take that faith as if Abraham has lived a perfect life and is able to be in perfect fellowship with God.

Like it's an incommensurate, sorry, it's a big word. The whole thing about faith is it's something completely and utterly shocking. In our flesh, what we'd like God to say is we're going to accelerate your good works, George.

That's what I'm going to do for you, George. I have a deal for you. He's like a sleazy type of salesman. We don't think that we want God to be like a sleazy salesman, but that's in a sense in our flesh, in our frail nature what we want.

We want God to be like a sleazy sales agent and say, listen, just for you because you're special. I like you. I have a good feeling about you. And so, you know, every time you memorize a Bible verse, I'm going to count it as if you've memorized the whole book of Hebrews.

[24 : 58] We're going to just accelerate all this. You go to church, I'm going to count it as if you've gone to church for five years. I'm going to accelerate things. And that's what we sort of like, but what we're stuck here is something completely and utterly, it's just grace that God says, no, no, no, I'm not going to get in a game with you of thinking that you can contribute something.

The whole point is, I want you to understand you can contribute zilch, nada, nothing. If you believe me, I'm going to work out the details.

And Abraham didn't understand what the details would be. Abraham, like Moses, like David, had to wait for Jesus to come. Just as we look back to what Jesus has done to apply it to our lives, they had to look forward to it.

But what they're believing is, God, we don't know how you're going to make us right with you. But we understand that our efforts don't matter at all, we're just going to believe that only you can do it and that you will do it and I trust that you will do it.

And that's what's so brilliant here is Paul reminds them that that's what they've done. They've done, in a sense, the exact same thing that Abraham has done. Only they have the great advantage. [26 : 18] Abraham didn't understand about Jesus Christ crucified. They understand Jesus Christ crucified, but they've had to do the same thing. They have to take God at his word that he will do everything that is needed to make people right with God.

And in a sense, what Paul is going to be saying in these next few verses, it's exactly the same thing that we understand. You know how we have a very common thing in our culture, how that, you know, somebody is more than a brother to me.

There's somebody completely not related to us biologically, but they're more like a brother to me than my brother. They're more like a parent to me or more like a mom or a dad to me than my actual mom or dad. And Paul is saying the exact same thing, that in God's economy, in the way God deals with us, it's not just about genetics.

That when God says, all the nations of the world will be blessed through you, Abraham, he's speaking on many levels. On one hand, that it's through him that the Messiah will eventually come, but at a fundamental level that it's this fundamental act of faith and trust in God to do what has to be done for us to be made right with him and that in a sense, it's Abraham, to be like Abraham, that's the thing which is important, not the biology, not the genetics.

That's the fundamental thing in terms of being made right with God. So in light of that, let's listen to what he says. I have to watch my time. I can't carry it away with this.

[27 : 49] Right? So back to verse 6. Just as Abraham believed God and it was counted to him as righteousness, know then, verse 7, that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. Just like I said, right?

More like a son to me. And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify, that is, make right, declare right, count as righteous, the pagans, by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham.

In a sense, what this Bible, what this text is saying is that when the Bible speaks, it's God speaking and it's God who preached the gospel to Abraham and when we hear what the Bible records about God's, about what is said to Abraham, we're hearing God speak.

This is one of the reasons why it is never, it is always wise to ask the question, what does the Bible teach? And so it says here again, by faith, sorry, verse 8 again, in the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the pagans by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham saying, in you shall all the nations be blessed.

So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. So, Paul is, he's gone to their experience, he said, no, it's not just experience, what does the Bible say?

[29 : 16] What does the Bible say? He's gone to Genesis and now he's going to deal with some of these things because he, the Bible wants us to live in step and in line with the gospel.

the Bible wants us to understand both how our situation was far worse than we could ever possibly imagine, that we were already separate from God and we could face an eternity separated from God.

And at the same time, it wants us to try to get, start to begin to understand the mystery of this grace that given our desperate need, God does something that's, our minds can't really fully grasp, but God does something unbelievably generous, unbelievably loving.

It's humiliating and costly to him, but God bears this vast cost so that human beings can be made right with him.

And he doesn't want George to live ten years into his marriage, eight years after his ordination or whatever the number of years was, feeling day by day as if he's doomed.

[30 : 35] And he doesn't want you to feel that too. He wants us to be gripped by the gospel. In the face of our anxiety, in the face of our worry, in the face of how we talk to ourselves at four o'clock in the morning, in the face of how we speak to ourselves when we're driving into interviews, in the face of our feeling that whatever we touch will go wrong, whatever we touch will go dirty, that I am only stupid, that I will always fail, that things that I am involved in will always fail, in the face of the worry that our grandparents or our parents have cursed us or that the next door neighbor has cursed us and it binds us, the Bible wants us to understand that God has done everything that needs to be done to make us right with him in the death of his son upon the cross, that we receive that not because of how brilliant and successful and our potential but in our complete and utter need, we put our trust and faith in him and we now have a completely different destiny and God wants us to live

with the gospel being real to our hearts and as the gospel is real to our hearts that it affects the way we minister and we marry and we date and we handle money and we see our culture and we see our world and we see our job and we see our attainments.

You are justified, you are counted righteous by what Jesus has done for you on the cross. What did he do for you on the cross? Series of questions or statements. Verse 10, for all who rely, I lost my place, I probably have.

Actually, put up the next point. For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God. That's in the book of Romans. Because that is true, every human being, I think, has some sense of being cursed.

Be mindful of that as we read these verses. Verse 10, 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, works of the law, once again, remember what Paul is saying here is he's not disparaging the Bible. He's saying, works of the law, you know, in a sense, God actually set before us all of the things you have to do just to show people amongst other things.

[33 : 16] I mean, it's not just that they would be failed, understand that they can't reach God by their own efforts, but it's also to point in a sense into the future how it's God who's going to clean us.

It's God who's going to feed us. It's God who's going to provide the sacrifice. It's God who's going to be the priest. It's God who's going to be the prophet. It's God who's going to be the king.

It's God who's going to do all of these things. You know, you hear this prophet, but a true and greater prophet will come and his name is Jesus. You see an earthly king like David, but a true and greater king will come whose name is Jesus.

You see the priest offering a sacrifice and a true and greater priest will come and his name is Jesus. And you see the sacrifices and a true and greater sacrifice will come and his name is Jesus.

And we can understand how ritually we can be clean, but a true and greater cleanliness will come in the person of Jesus. And we can see how we can be healed, but a true and greater healing will come and his name is Jesus.

[34 : 14] and we can see how just social relations will come, but a true and greater healing of relationships will come and his name is Jesus. And so it's not just that the law is telling us that we can't actually accomplish these things by ourselves, but at the same time that it's teaching us that we can accomplish this, it's pointing to the very, very center of our lives where we want to be reconciled to the creation.

We want to be reconciled to human beings. We want to be reconciled to ourselves. We want to be reconciled to God. We want to feel clean. We want to feel fed. We want to feel protected. We want to feel loved.

We don't want to feel abandoned. And that God himself is the one who is going to do this for us in the person of his son. And that is what the Bible is pointing to in the law.

And he's saying, listen, you listen to the law and the law just tells us what we all know. We're never clean enough. We're never fed enough. We're never strong enough. We get sick.

We die. We fail. We sin. We betray. We abandon. We are abandoned. That happens. And the laws made it all clear.

[35 : 22] And then verses 11, 12, and 13, such wonderful verses in quick, rapid fire. Every case he quotes the Bible, he makes a point, he quotes the Bible, whether it's from Deuteronomy, Habakkuk, or Leviticus.

Verse 11, Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for the righteous shall live by faith. What does that mean? It's saying that the Bible, it's from Habakkuk, that the Bible itself is going to teach us, just as the Genesis story about Abraham teaches us, that it's by believing in God's promise in his word that he will do everything to make us right with him.

That's what makes us right when we believe that, when we realize we can't be clean enough, we can't be whole enough, we can't be alive enough, we can't be slim enough, or strong enough, or rich enough, even if we are for a moment, and we think we're the cat's meow, but then we get old, then we get sick, then we die, then our loved ones die, then there's always this basic need, and it's to bring us to this point to realize that God has to do something that we receive by faith, and that he has done in the person of his son.

Verse 12, but the law is not of faith, it's moral striving, rather the one who does them shall live. In other words, you have to make a choice. Are you just going to continue to think, I'm just going to pretend I'm really good, I'm going to pretend that I'm never going to die, I'm just going to pretend that I'm right with God, I'm just going to pretend that all I need to be centered, and some of you are saying, George, I'm not pretending, but it's only pretending in the sense that all these things fail. They all fail. Verse 13, Christ redeemed us. Redeemed is a word from the marketplace, it's the word from the town center, it's the word that Jesus pays a price to deliver us from slavery into life. [37 : 22] Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written, curse it is everyone who is hanged on a tree.

You know, many people in our culture say that the way forward is just to embrace our cursedness. I was just watching a TV show the other day and the ex-wife says to her husband, you drink too much.

And he, with an impish smile, and we're meant to sympathize with him, says, no, I drink the exact right amount. I drink the exact right amount as she walks out.

And in much of our culture, we're sort of taught to just embrace the fact that you drink, just embrace whatever it is, the adultery, just embrace the betrayal, just embrace the greed, just embrace the aggression, just embrace it and stand tall.

You could put up the next point. What the Bible is saying here is God calls out, humble yourself. Don't embrace the curse.

[38 : 26] Embrace the one who embraced your curse to make you right with me. It's a completely different way of living. Embrace the one who embraced your curse to make you right with me after you humble yourself.

And then verse 14 sort of summarizes all of this thing as we try to draw it all to a close. Actually, we'll read verse 13 again. 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 pagans so that we might receive the promised Holy Spirit through faith. If you could put up the last point, that would be great. You know, it was my curse, not his, that he bore on the cross. By faith in him, the curse is gone and I am blessed to grow as God's very own, as the Holy Spirit indwells me.

You know, you know, when I, when I really, I mean, I still struggle with it at times, you know, because you can't live your life for 35 years thinking one thing about yourself and just change it like that.

[39 : 50] And I, I, you know, I need to be gripped by the gospel. I need to be gripped by texts like this. I need to be reminded that every curse, all the doom, fell on him that I might have his destiny, that he loved me so much that he took my doom and my curse so that I could have his blessedness and his destiny, that that, I need to be gripped by that.

It needs to be real to my heart. But if you think about it, all of our fears, those of us who struggle with fears that if people got to know me as they really know me, that they wouldn't like me, that everything about me is going to be a failure, that everything I touch will just get dirty, will get soiled, that there's just something broken in me.

And at the same time that we believe this, we hate that it will ever be revealed. And it's why it's so easy for us to turn to alcohol or pornography or just some type of addiction or we're putting on false fronts or aggression or bullying types of behavior to keep people far from us.

But if you think about it, all of our fears around cursedness is crucifixion. Being naked and perfectly revealed to others, Jesus died on the cross naked.

Being publicly mocked, Jesus was publicly mocked as he's dying on the cross. Being mocked by people in authority, the people who know, the people who are successful.

[41 : 14] And not only that, but even being mocked by the rabble, the failures, the people who wander around just by having a drink, the elite and the rabble, all mocking you, all up at front, to be in pain, to be abandoned, to have it all be done in public, to be mocked, to be seen as doomed, to die a death as doomed, as a failure.

And all of these are things that in fact, Jesus does. You can see how to die upon the cross is in a sense to be marked as cursed. And the Bible says, what does the Bible say?

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 you and me so that we might receive the promised spirit through faith.

If you are in Jesus, you are not cursed. Your curse was born by him. If you are in Jesus, you are not doomed.

[42 : 26] Your doom was born by him. Your destiny, I don't know if you're going to get the job or all that, but your destiny is that when you die, your eyes will be awake for full the first time.

And the creator of all things, your heavenly father, will look at you with love and welcome you to be with him forever. And that is your destiny.

And you live your life on the way to your destiny. with the promised Holy Spirit living within you, giving you life. Please stand.

Please stand. Let us pray. Father, thank you for Jesus.

Thank you for his death upon the cross. Thank you that he bore the curse, my curse, the curse of those who were here that he bore it on the cross.

[43 : 46] Thank you for this great act of love. Thank you, Father, that when we put our faith and trust in Jesus, that you make us alive, that you redeem us from slavery, that you make us right with yourself, that you give your Holy Spirit to indwell us, that you give us a new destiny and a new future that is certain, not because we're certain, but is certain because you are unchanging and certain and you have promised in your word.

And so, Father, may your Holy Spirit so bring us to Jesus and bring us to the gospel. Make us disciples of Jesus who are gripped by the gospel, learning to live blessed by your Holy Spirit that we might be a blessing as we bring you glory here in Ottawa and to the ends of the earth.

And we ask this in the name of Jesus. Amen. Amen.