

The Gospel of Grace Stands Unaltered

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Date: 28 February 2016

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[0 : 00] Hey, I was thinking this week about the sound of music. Why are you laughing? How many of you have watched that all the way through the movie?

Okay, wow, man, I have not. I've watched probably most of it, two-thirds of it, in bits and pieces, here and there.

I think I've got a pretty good idea of how it goes. I've never sat down. Is it, what, three? How long is it? Three hours long? Longer? Three? Three hours long? Okay, great. There's a song that appears partway, I think most of the way through the movie.

So where Maria and Captain Von Trapp, they finally confess their love for one another, and then they're, you know, walking through, what is it, like a garden at night or something, and wondering how all this could come about.

The song's called Something Good, right? And a few of the lines of the song go like this. Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. So somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good, right?

[1 : 09] I'm trying to see if any of you are, like, humming that to yourselves right now. Hey, hey, come back, come back. You know, pay attention. The two of them, they have this idea that this blessing they've received, this, you know, this amazing new relationship they have, this love that they have for one another, this wonderful thing they have, this must have happened on the basis of something good that each of them has done in the past.

They think, somewhere, I've got to have earned this somehow. After all, nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. Good things happen for a reason. Now, if you're blessed, that means you must have done something to have earned that blessing through your kindness, your hard work, some sort of merit.

There's this concept of karma there that, if something good happens to me, I must have earned it at some point in the past. The movie version of the Vaughan Trapps, they're not the only ones who have trouble believing that God might bless us without any merit on our part.

There's something in us. So there's something in us that says, I must have earned that blessing somehow. I must have earned what I'm experiencing now in this life. There must have been some sort of hard work on my part that brought me to where I'm at.

There must have been some sort of character quality in myself that's brought me the good things that have come my way. Good things don't happen unless you meet some sort of condition.

[2 : 35] Or if you're going to put it another way, you might put it like this. You have to obey some sort of rule or law that will earn you God's blessing or favor on your life. Follow this one weird rule, and all of a sudden, this good thing will happen to you.

It's on the internet, all over the place. Do what's right, and you're blessed by God. Do what's wrong, you earn God's displeasure.

Maybe you'd even say his curse. Well, for those of us who've been here each Sunday morning, those of us who've been learning from God's word, we know right away what God thinks of this mindset.

As we've been preaching, we've been learning about the gospel of grace from the book of Galatians. And God has told us, God the Holy Spirit has told us through his apostle Paul what he thinks about this.

Because Paul wrote a letter about this very thing. Now, this letter that Paul wrote, he wrote to the first century churches in a region of the world that was called Galatia.

[3 : 34] It's an area in modern-day Turkey. And in this letter, Paul, he absolutely ferociously attacks what he calls a false gospel. And this false gospel could be summarized as follows.

Nothing comes from nothing. Nothing ever could. So somewhere in my youth or childhood, I must have done something good. And it sounds really pretty when Julie Andrews and Christopher Plummer are singing it.

In the real world, in real life, in your real relationships, in this real church, it does incalculable harm. It does terrible things in our relationships. What was happening in these churches was that there were two ethnic factions in these churches. There were the Jewish Christians.

And then there was everybody else. The Jewish Christians, they were the good church kids. So they've grown up with the Old Testament all their lives.

[4 : 41] They know it by heart. Some of them literally would know it by heart. They grew up believing they were God's chosen people. Correctly believing that.

They grew up doing their best to follow the law of Moses, which is great. The everyone else group of Gentile Christians.

They were kind of like the Hells Angels biker gangs who are being introduced to this church of good church kids. They were on the outside looking in, but Paul and his friend Barnabas had told them good news about a gospel of grace.

And this gospel of grace, this good news of grace, said that even though everyone has sinned, whether you're the good church kid or you're the Hells Angel biker, everyone has sinned.

Everyone's rebelled against God. Everyone has broken his law without exception. But God sent his own son. God sent the man Jesus of Nazareth, his chosen king, his Messiah, who is cursed.

[5 : 44] He was cursed for all that we have done wrong on our behalf. And we, in turn, we are blessed by God because Jesus perfectly obeyed the law that his father gave.

Jesus did what was right at every moment without exception. We have access to God. We're part of God's family. We're reconciled to God. And God gives us new, eternal life through his spirit who is at work in us, who is at work among us.

This is the gospel of grace that Paul has been preaching. It's good news. And now Paul is explaining that we have all this simply because we have faith in Jesus.

In other words, we have all this simply because we trust that Jesus' goodness is accepted by God. We trust that Jesus took the penalty for our sins.

We trust that Jesus is a trustworthy substitute for us on our behalf. There's a faction in the early church, though.

[6 : 52] There's a faction that we would call the Judaizers. And these Judaizers, they're saying, well, yeah, Jesus will save you Gentiles. You're welcome to be a part of God's people.

But only if you clean up your act. Only if you obey all the stipulations of the law of Moses. On that basis, you will be accepted.

It's not just a matter of you're accepted and now you change your behavior. They're saying you have to change your behavior in order to be accepted by God. In other words, to be a Christian means that, yes, you have faith in Jesus.

But then you have to also, in order to be accepted by God, you also have to do all the things that a good Jew is supposed to do. All your males have to be circumcised. You have to start following these feast days.

You have to stop eating unclean foods. You have to follow all the aspects of the law that marks you out as a Jew. Nothing comes from nothing. So if you're going to receive the blessing of being part of God's family, receiving a spirit, enjoying eternal life with him, you've got to start performing.

[8 : 03] You've got to start doing something good to earn your place. And the law of Moses tells you what you're supposed to do to earn this blessing. That's the way they thought. And that brings us to Galatians 3, verses 15 through 22.

Because these Judaizers, they've been arguing that God's law, the law of Moses, they've been arguing that this corrects his gospel of grace.

And the way it corrects it is by adding on conditions. The Gentiles have to meet certain conditions in order to qualify. And these conditions include those things.

Circumcision, cleanliness rituals, religious festivals, dietary habits, and so forth. And Paul's going to argue in these verses, God's law doesn't correct the gospel of grace.

Rather, God's law reinforces the gospel of grace. God's law reinforces the gospel of grace. If you haven't found Galatians in your Bible, and, you know, it's really easy if you have a smartphone.

[9 : 04] But if you don't, if you've got a paper copy, it's near the end in the New Testament. We're going to be looking at Galatians chapter 3. And let me read here verses 15 through 22. So follow along in your own copy of Scripture. Before I begin, these are some tricky verses.

Scripture is clear. We've talked in the journey class about the clarity of Scripture, how God's word is, it is clear. You don't have to be, have a PhD.

You don't have to have knowledge of the Greek and Hebrew, the original languages, to understand it. But that doesn't mean every part of God's word is equally easy to understand. And these are tricky verses.

So if you read this and you come away thinking, I have no idea what just happened. Well, hang in there. We'll talk about it. Okay? So verses 15 through 22 read as follows. This is what Paul writes. To give a human example, brothers, even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. Now, the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring.

[10 : 06] It does not say, and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, and to your offspring, who is Christ. This is what I mean.

The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God so as to make the promise void. For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise, but God gave it to Abraham by a promise.

Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary.

Now, an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. Is the law, then, contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not. For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

But the scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe. So here's what Paul is saying.

[11 : 15] Here's the word of the Lord to us today. The gospel of grace stands unaltered. The gospel of grace stands unaltered. Now, if you're not familiar with the history of God's relationship with his people, a lot of this might not have made a lot of sense to you.

So we're going to start walking through this. But the idea here, the main idea that we want to hang on to, is this, that God's promise of blessings, his gospel of grace, it wasn't modified.

It wasn't nullified. It wasn't erased by the introduction of the law of Moses. Quite the opposite. On the contrary, God's law reinforces the gospel of grace.

So let's work out what Paul is saying. He's reminding the Galatian Christians about the history of the Jewish nation. So he's giving them, saying, hey, let's go back in time.

Let's look at our family history here. Let's go back to the days of Abraham. Jump in the magic school bus. Travel back in time to the days of Abraham. And Paul's reminding them of how their relationship with God began.

[12 : 19] And here's how it started. It started with the promise that God made to Abraham. If you were to read Genesis chapter 12, you'd read the following verses. Go from your country, and your kindred, and your father's house, to the land that I will show you.

And I will make of you a great nation. And I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you. And him who dishonors you, I will curse.

And in you, all the families of the earth shall be blessed. This promise was a seed that was planted in the ground, and a promise that eventually sprouted and flowered into this promise of blessing, this promise of God's Messiah, which Abraham's offspring is blessed with eternal life in the power of God's Spirit.

This is where, this is where that promise really starts to develop and begin. And so we have here, in these verses, what we might call a covenant. Now, covenant, that's not a word we use in everyday conversation in our society.

We don't talk about covenants. When I go bring my car in to get fixed, I don't sign a covenant with a mechanic detailing what the procedures are. We don't talk about covenants very much, but in the ancient world, a covenant was a very common thing.

[13 : 42] People would have totally understood what this meant. It's simply an agreement between two or more parties that outlines mutual rights and responsibilities. All it basically does is, let's define our relationship, let's put it down in words, clearly what the expectations are, what our rights are, what our responsibilities are.

Let's communicate clearly about this. Let's bind ourselves to one another. This promise in Genesis 12, this was a covenant that God made with Abraham. And this was an unconditional covenant. What this means is that Abraham didn't have to meet any conditions in order to receive that blessing. God chose to bless Abraham regardless of his performance.

And he promised to bless not only Abraham, but in several other places in Genesis, he promises to extend this blessing to his offspring, or maybe your translation says his seed as well.

If we return a moment to Galatians 3, verse 16, we're going to notice that Paul picks up on this idea. And he makes, this is really kind of an odd statement. Maybe this stood out to you.

[14:53] It certainly did to me. Paul says this, verse 16. Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, and to offsprings, referring to many, but referring to one, and to your offspring, who is Christ.

In other words, this promise was made to Abraham, but extended to a singular descendant of Abraham, to a single offspring, a single seed, a single descendant.

What makes this an odd argument is, does it seem to you a little ticky-tack? A little weird, like this word translated offspring or seed, like he's really making his point that it's singular, not plural, and it's really especially weird because if you were to skip down to verse 29, he talks about you, plural, you all, are Abraham's offspring.

So now, okay, well now it's plural there. That word, that idea. It seems a little weird that Paul would make this argument. What's he getting at? I think what he's getting at is this, that, you know, yes, offspring or seed can refer to many people, but the first place we want to go is, we want to think this refers to one person.

Our first instinct should be, this refers to one singular person, this one seed, Jesus Christ. Because Jesus isn't just a descendant of Abraham, he is the descendant of Abraham.

[16:23] He is the ultimate descendant of Abraham, the one to whom all the promises point.

That's simply all that Paul is saying here. This idea of there being just one seed of Abraham, one descendant of Abraham, it's, you know, in this, in the line of this argument, it seems a little bit out of place, but this idea is going to pop up again later, in a moment.

So what we'll do for now, we'll, I don't know, stick a pin in it or something, and we'll come back to this. But to keep understanding where Paul is going, we're going to have to, once again, go back in time, and this time, we're not going to go all the way back to Abraham.

This time, we're going to go to Mount Sinai, because after Abraham died, his descendants, the Israelites, they traveled to Egypt, they lived there for 430 years, and then at the end of this time, God brought them out of Egypt, to a place in the Sinai Peninsula, called, fittingly enough, Mount Sinai.

And he brought them to the foot of the mountain there, and there God gave them his law. And God's law, it was a fairly complex, detailed set of instructions, that explained to them, how they were supposed to live as a nation, how they were supposed to govern themselves, how they were supposed to relate to one another, ultimately boils down to, how they were supposed to, in practical terms, love God, and love one another.

That's what the law was. It explained to you how to do that. This law explained to them, how they were to live as a nation, that was holy, a nation that was set apart, for God, that had a unique relationship to him, that no other nation, in history had.

[18:05] Now how did God give them, his law? Well he did it through a man named Moses. So we often call this, the law of Moses. Now here's where, up till now, up to this point, the Judaizers would have agreed with everything.

They would have agreed with everything so far, and here's where we're going to part ways.

Because the Judaizers misunderstand, what's going on here. The Judaizers believe, this law of Moses, acts, it functions more or less, as an amendment, to God's covenant with Abraham.

In other words, God had this relationship with Abraham, and his descendants, and now he's going to, he's going to change, that relationship, he's going to change that relationship, by saying, well, this blessing, before it was on the basis of a promise, but now we're going to add conditions to it. It's not just a promise, now it requires a performance, on your part, in order to receive, God's blessing, of eternal life. Before, the covenant was unconditional, but now the law of Moses, adds conditions, to the covenant, that God made with Abraham.

So, you have to obey, the law of Moses, you have to follow, all its rules and regulations, you have to perform it, as a good Jew, in order to receive, this blessing, that God had promised. It is on that

basis, that you receive the blessing.

[19 : 27] And here's how Paul responds, in verse 15. To give a human example, brothers, even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it, or adds to it, once it has been ratified.

Now, what's funny is, we're not 100% clear, on what Paul is referring to, because a lot of covenants, could be changed after the fact. But, probably, he's referring to, some sort of ancient custom, whether in the Jewish world, or that the Galatians, were familiar with, to a custom, involving some sort of, last will and testament, that you'd put into effect, in writing, and once it had been, ratified, once it had been approved, by the signing party, it could not be altered, could not be annulled, could not be taken back.

It's been completed. And so, Paul continues in verse 17, this is what I mean. The law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul, a covenant, previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void.

So the law doesn't annul, it doesn't undo, the covenant, that God made with Abraham. Now, a Judaizer might, be upset, and say, that's not fair.

We don't believe, that the law of Moses, annuls, undo, undoes this covenant, with Abraham. Why are you saying, that it would do that? Why are you saying, that this makes the covenant, with Abraham null and void?

[21 : 00] Well, Paul explains in verse 18. If the inheritance, comes by the law, it no longer, comes by promise, but God gave it, to Abraham, by a promise.

So we have, this inheritance, we have this blessing, of new life, in God's presence. And if you believe, that this blessing, only comes to those, who obey all the rules, and regulations, of the law of Moses, then what you've done, is you have added on, conditions, to that first covenant.

The blessing, then, no longer comes by promise, now it comes by performance. But God, originally promised it, without any conditions.

So what you've done, is you have, undermined the very basis, for this covenant. covenant. You have gutted it, of what made it, so precious, and so valuable. You've gutted it, of its core, this covenant of grace.

You've altered, or annulled, God's covenant, with Abraham. And Paul's saying, that's impossible. That can't be done. Maybe it's hard, for us to realize, what, to just sort of, feel viscerally, what Paul is trying to say.

[22 : 16] So let me use, an example. Let's suppose, you know, there's a thing about Hollywood, like they love producing sequels now. It's always pumping out, one sequel after another.

You have a successful franchise, let's produce a new movie. So let's say, well, Sound of Music, right? It's a movie, badly in need of a sequel. It's been what, 50 years? More?

Since that thing was made? And we haven't done anything, with this? I mean, man, can you imagine, how many people, would go to see, The Sound of Music 2? In the sequel, the Von Trapps have come to America, which they did, in real life.

If this were set in the, well, if this were set in the present, and the Von Trapps came to America, they'd probably have their own reality show, right? So, so maybe the movie could follow that, follow along that line, some sort of, maybe instead of a movie, we could just have a reality TV show, with the Von Trapps.

How about that? What happens in the sequel, so I'm going to, I'm going to write the sequel for us, the main plot line, okay? And if there's anyone here, who's into writing movie scripts, take notes, and talk to me after this, after the service.

[23 : 18] Okay, so here's what we're going to do. Maria Von Trapps gets fed up, with her husband, for leaving the toilet seat up. Maria has been nagging him about it, but George just, he, he just doesn't make any effort, to change.

He's kind of settled in, you know? And, she's, she's done. She can't put up, with this anymore. So she goes, she, let's say, in this movie, or TV show, or whatever, they've written out their wedding vows, and so she goes, and she digs them up, and she takes a pen out, and she adds in the margin, an extra clause, to their wedding vows.

And in this clause, she writes that, he agrees, to put the toilet seat back down, whenever he uses the bathroom. she takes this triumphantly to him, and says, you have violated our marriage covenant.

I want a divorce. It's a classic American love story. It'll sell. Right? No.

No one is going, everyone is going to think that's ridiculous. Worst plot twist ever. You can't just go in, and alter a marriage covenant. You can't just go back, and rewrite it.

[24 : 37] What's said, has been said. It can't be undone. And you can't make this unconditional thing, a conditional thing. That will sooner happen, than God will go in, and alter his own covenant to Abraham.

We're going to talk about this more in a minute, but, that scenario I just laid out, that ridiculous scenario, that will sooner happen, than that God will come to you, and say, I know I gave you your salvation freely.

I know you gave, I gave you eternal life freely, on the basis of what my son has done, but now you've got to start performing, and if you don't perform, I'm taking it away. It's ridiculous.

He will never do that to you. God's law has not revised his promise. God's law has not revised his promise. The gospel of grace stands unaltered.

Now we're going to take some time, to explore that a little bit more, to think about what good news this is, but for now, we're going to have to do a little bit of cleanup, because this creates a bit of an issue.

[25 : 56] Paul knows what the Judaizers are going to say next to him. What they're going to say next, they're going to ask him a question here. Because what he has done is, he has said, that's not what the law is for.

It's not done to redefine the basis, for your acceptance by God. It's not done to redefine, how you receive God's blessing. And they're thinking, well, what is it for, then?

Verse 19, why then the law? What was the point? If obedience to the law, hasn't become the basis, for God's promised blessing, why did God give it to Moses, in the first place?

Paul explains in verse 19. Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come, to whom the promise had been made.

And we'll stop there, because we're only like, what, halfway through verse 19, and already we're going to need to explain some stuff. The law was added, Paul says, because of transgressions, because of the sinful behavior, of God's people.

[27 : 07] You don't have to read very far, in the book of Exodus, after the giving of the law, to see that, yep, God's people, kind of rebelled against him. They didn't obey his law. Now there's two possible things, that Paul could have meant here.

There's two possibilities, so let's give both of them, and then I'll explain, why I think one of them, and only one is correct. One possibility, Paul may mean, that the law was added, to restrain, the transgressions, restrain, the rebellion, of God's people.

This is, what theologians might call, the second use of the law. And it's, a very, that's a thing. That is one reason, that God gave the law. So, if that were, your interpretation, of this passage, you would be theologically, okay.

But I don't think, that's what Paul's getting at here. I think what he's getting at, is what he says, in verse 22. Verse 22. The scripture, imprisoned, everything, under sin.

So that the promise, by faith in Jesus Christ, might be given, to those who believe. So here's what, I think Paul is getting at, when he says, that it was added, because of transgressions.

[28 : 22] The law, imprisoned, or locked up, God's people, under the power, of sin. The law, imprisoned, or locked up, God's people, under the power, of their own sinfulness.

How did it do this? It did this, by giving our rebellion, against God, a means of expression. Those of you, who are parents, of young children. Have you ever felt, like you gave your kid, a rule?

Don't put your foot, on the table. What's the very first thing, your kid does? Put on the table.

Sometimes you could, seriously, don't you feel like, you could give your kid, just an arbitrary rule, and the very first thing, they're going to do, is go and break that rule, right? They're rebelling.

They're fighting your authority, and they're just looking, for an occasion, to express it.

Your rules, give their rebellion, a means of expression. Sure, you give them, give it to restrain, harm to them, but, what happens is, they express their rebellion, against you, by breaking, the rules you give.

[29 : 35] And so it is, with God's law. God's law reveals that, apart from, the renewing work, of God's spirit, in our heart, apart from that, we have a, we would have had, a stubborn, and rebellious nature, that rejects God, that rejects, his gospel, of grace, that fights, back against God.

So what the law does, is it calls out, the sin, of God's people. It shows the sin, that's present, in their heart. Martin Luther, the 16th century, or former, has a, fairly colorful, commentary, on Galatians. It's, if you ever want to read, a commentary on Galatians, that's a great one, because boy, you will not be bored, reading it, that's for sure. Here's how he, here's what he has to say, about this. This is the principal, purpose of the law, and it's most valuable, contribution.

As long as a person, is not a murderer, adulterer, thief, he would swear, that he is righteous. How is God, going to humble, such a person? Except by the law.

The law is the hammer of death, the thunder of hell, and the lightning of God's wrath, to bring down the proud, and shameless hypocrites. When the law was instituted, on Mount Sinai, it was accompanied, by lightning, by storms, by the sound of trumpets, to tear to pieces, that monster called, self-righteousness.

[30 : 57] As long as a person, thinks he is right, he is going to be, incomprehensibly, proud and presumptuous. He is going to hate God, despise his grace, and mercy, and ignore the promises, in Christ.

The gospel, of the free forgiveness, of sins through Christ, will never appeal, to the self-righteous. This monster, of self-righteousness, this stiff-necked beast, needs a big axe.

And that is what the law is, a big axe. Accordingly, the proper use, and function of the law, is to threaten, until the conscience, is scared stiff. Tell us what you really think, Martin Luther.

The law calls out our sin. The law identifies, our sin for what it is. The law doesn't let us feel, like we're good people, we're righteous people, anymore.

The law kills, self-righteousness, it reduces it to ruins, and in so doing, it shuts us in. It closes off, every means of escape. It closes off, every avenue to escape, the judgment that our sin deserves.

[32 : 07] It closes off, every avenue to come, to God, and to experience his blessing, to experience new life, in his presence. It closes, all of our options off, except for one.

The promise by faith, in Jesus Christ, given to those who believe. God's law forces us, to come to Christ.

It called out, the sin of his people, and because God is holy, this sin separated, them from him. His presence among them, would mean their destruction. So not only does God's law, call out the, sin of his people, it calls out the disunity, between God, and his people.

That they are fundamentally, at odds with one another. Back in verse 19, we read this about the law. It was put in place, through angels, by an intermediary.

Now an intermediary, implies more than one, but God is one. Well, we see here, that there are two ways, in which God's law, emphasizes, there's a disunity, between him and his people.

[33 : 22] First of all, God's law was brought, to Moses, by the hand of angels. Now, the idea that God's law, was given to Moses, by the means of angels, that really isn't explicitly, in the Old Testament.

There's some hints at it. But, both Jewish tradition, and other New Testament authors, as well, they agreed on this point, that, God's law came to Moses, through angels. Second, God's law was brought, to the people, by Moses.

So, when it comes to God, and his people, the law comes, from God, it's given to angels, angels come, give it to Moses, Moses comes, gives it to the people. So, there's the existence, of these messengers, there's the existence, of an intermediary, that implies, a lack of oneness.

That implies, a lack of unity, between God, and his people. They need, go-betweens. Let's suppose, that you, were as a parent, wanted to tell, your son, you know, don't put your foot, on the table, I suppose.

And the way, that you did it, was, you went to, your spouse, and said, could you tell, our daughter, to tell our son, not to put the foot, on the table? What does that tell you, about your relationship?

[34 : 44] There's a lack, of oneness. There's a lack, of unity. There's something, between you. God, can't just dwell, with his people. The people, can't just waltz up, on Mount Sinai, to be with God.

Rather, Exodus chapter 20, emphasizes, that they can't, come close to God. Verse 21, says, says, in Exodus chapter 20, the people, stood far off, while Moses, drew near, to the thick darkness, where God was.

Now, people have to, stand far off, so the law, calls out, the sin of God's people. It calls out, the resulting disunity, between God, and his people, and so God's law, requires his promised Messiah.

God's law, requires, his promised Messiah. Remember, how Paul had said, in verse 16, how, there is just one seed, there's just one offspring, that he, that the promises, come to. We're coming back, to that idea, there being one seed, one offspring. Well, here he emphasizes, oneness again. Before, he'd emphasize, the oneness of Christ, and again, in verse 20, he says, God is one.

[35 : 57] This is, something that sort of, bleeds a bit, into next week's sermon. I don't mean to steal, all of your thunder, Jonathan, but I'm going to steal, a little bit of it. All right?

I think what's going on, is that Paul is reminding us, of how much God, seeks oneness. There is a oneness, in the Trinity. The Father, the Son, and Holy Spirit, they are three separate persons, but they are one God.

They are one in essence, they are one in purpose, they are one in relationship. And they long to extend, their oneness in purpose, their oneness in relationship, their oneness in love, to you, and to me.

And that's why, Paul tells the Galatian Christians, verse 28, you are all one, in Christ Jesus. There's that oneness, that appears a third time.

Because God's law, requires his promised Messiah, it directs us away, from self-righteousness, and towards Christ's righteousness. So what it does, is it directs us, funnels us towards, Jesus Christ, to oneness, with Jesus Christ.

[37 : 03] God's law, directs us to identify, with Christ, to recognize ourselves, that we're part of, that we can become part of his family, by believing in Jesus Christ, and trusting his righteousness.

It draws us to this, relationship of love, and oneness, and of unity, that God desires so much. This is why, the gospel of grace, stands unaltered.

This is why, God's law, reinforces the gospel of grace. This is why, God's law, has not revised his promise. And this is why, God's law, requires his promised Messiah. It's all meant, to direct us, to oneness, with God.

It's meant to direct us, to this inheritance, to this life, giving relationship, with God, through his son, Jesus Christ. Paul writes, verse 21, if a law, had been given, that could give life, then righteousness, would indeed be, by the law.

But the fact is, a law, a code of, behavior, and regulation, as valuable as it is, it can't give you life. Only God can do that. Only oneness with God, can do that.

[38 : 23] Life comes through, that relationship. This is what Jesus longs, for. This is what he longs, to bring us into. This is what he prayed, to his father for.

John chapter 17, his prayer, that he utters, in the garden of Gethsemane, as he prepares, for his crucifixion, at the most emotional, profound moment, in his life, here's what Jesus says, to his father.

John chapter 17, verse 3, he writes, he speaks, thanks to his father, this is eternal life. That they know you, the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom you have sent.

That's what he says, life is, knowing God, and knowing him. And he continued, praying to his father, that you and I, would receive, this life-giving oneness. He prays, the glory, that you and I, have given me, the glory that you, have given me, I have given to them, that they may be one, even as we are one.

I in them, and you in me, that they may become perfectly one, so that the world may know, that you sent me, and loved them, even as you loved me. That God could have, the same love for you, that he has for his own son.

[39 : 43] Father, I desire, that they also, whom you have given me, may be with me, where I am, to see my glory, that you have given me, because you loved me, before the foundation, of the world.

Oh, righteous father, even though the world, does not know you, I know you. And these know, that you have sent me.

I made known to them, your name, and I will continue, to make it known, that the love, with which you have loved me, may be in them, and I in them. Why is it, that the gospel of grace, stands unaltered?

Why is it, that God's law, reinforces the gospel of grace? It's because, nothing comes from nothing. God wants to give you, the good life. He does.

He wants to give you, the good life, a life of oneness, with him, a life empowered, by his spirit. And that doesn't come, from nothing. It's a life, that is possible, not because I have done, something

good, but because Jesus Christ, has done something good.

[40 : 58] Jesus lived a life, of perfect obedience, to God's law. Jesus earned God's favor, on our behalf. Jesus died, a cursed death, on a criminal's cross, taking God's punishment, on our behalf.

And Jesus was raised, again, to new life. That everyone, who believes in him, is counted righteous, by God. Everyone, who believes in him, is invited, into a relationship, of oneness with God, with one another.

Do you believe? Do you believe, in Jesus Christ? Do you trust? Do you want, do you want the good life, of oneness with God?

Do you feel, at odds with God? Do you feel, a sense of distance? Do you feel, a lack of oneness, with him? Do you feel, a lack of oneness, with other believers here? Do you feel, kind of uncomfortable, and want, just kind of want, to get out of here?

Or maybe, there's somebody here, you're like, at odds with. Remember, that your failure, to keep God's law, your failure, to live up to his commandments, that does not nullify, your relationship with him, if you believe in him.

[42 : 10] Go back to the cross. Go back to the cross. See that your savior, was hanged there, in your place. Take time, mull over this, especially with, the other fellow believers, you need them, to remind you.

You need, that oneness with them, to wonder at, what Jesus has done, for you. Because Jesus, has brought us, the gospel of grace. And through him, we're made one with God. Our God and Father, we thank you, that this gospel of grace, Let's see.