

If you have your Bible with you, go ahead and open up to Galatians, chapter 3. That's where we're going to be. If you don't have a Bible, I just want to encourage you, underneath the seatback in front of you, there's a Bible there you can use. That's our gift to you. If you don't have a Bible, we want you to take that home. We want the Word of God to be in your home, so feel free to take that if you need it. Otherwise, turn to Galatians, chapter 3. We're going to be in verses 10 through 14 tonight.

You know, we're almost halfway through the book now, and so those of you who have been with us this entire series so far, we've been going through this. In fact, a show of hands, how many are in a home group that's studying the book of Galatians right now? That's great. That's great. So a lot of you are going through that. One of the things (if you haven't noticed it already, you're about to notice it) is that as you go through Galatians, the book begins to become really obnoxiously repetitive, over and over and over again. It's like the movie *Groundhog Day*. It's just like every day just is the same in this text.

It's not a bad thing, as I'll show in a second, but I think as you go through it, it's like even as a pastoral team and wrestling with how to teach us, *How do you get creative from week to week and not say the exact same thing we just said last week*, right? I mean, so every week, it's like how many times can you rephrase the fact that the works of your flesh don't save you; you're justified by faith? Over and over again, you're going to get a heavy dose of it here in this middle section of the book, but that's good, though. I think that repetitiveness is good.

Paul said to the Philippian church in Philippians, chapter 3, "To write the same things again to you is no trouble to me because I recognize it's a safeguard for your soul." Peter said, in 2 Peter, "I enjoy reminding you of these things even though you already know them," and so what I recognize as we go through this book, and it's just, man, it's a kick to the face every week, right? The same idea that, "You are not saved by the works of your hands. You're saved by Jesus Christ and faith in him alone."

That repetitiveness is good for us. It washes over us, and it reminds us of the salvation that we've received in Jesus Christ. That's good for the church, and so if that becomes to that point for you, just be encouraged. God loves you enough to tell you 100 times in this book, "Jesus is the only way to be saved," and so we'll keep going, though.

But for those of you who are maybe just joining us for the first time in the study of this book, let me just recap, briefly, kind of, what this book is about, where we've been, and where we're going tonight. The apostle Paul has written a letter to these churches in the Galatian area, kind of modern-day Turkey-esque as you head east or west there in that region, and these churches he had visited on his very first missionary journey, he comes back, and he writes this letter to them.

This is the earliest letter the apostle Paul has written in your New Testament. This is the oldest one of the 13 he wrote in the New Testament, and he is writing to these churches because when he went there for the very first time and established his churches there, Paul very clearly defined what the foundation of a church is. It's on faith in Jesus Christ alone for the salvation he has brought.

God has provided a substitute for man in a way our own flesh couldn't earn salvation for ourselves, so God has provided Jesus Christ as our Savior, and anything that's going to be built on the church has to be built on that, that gospel. Paul laid that foundation clearly for the church, and thus the churches were established. What happened, evidently, is after the apostle Paul left and went back home, a certain particular group of Jewish converts, known as Judaizers, came in and began teaching contrary to these Galatian churches what Paul had first taught them.

Their idea was this, going, "Listen, Paul doesn't know what he's talking about. I know Paul was here and helped gets this going, but he doesn't know what he's talking about. It's not that easy, this salvation gig. Yes, you need to believe in Jesus Christ. Yes, Jesus is the Messiah. Yes, he's the only way. But what about circumcision as the covenantal sign of the Jew? What about the works of the law our God has mandated for the Jewish nation for believers now? What about adherence to those things? Surely, you don't just throw all these things away once you've come to faith in Jesus Christ."

What these Judaizers began to preach to these Galatian churches is..."Yes, you need faith in Jesus Christ, but you also need additional works that you need to adhere to before God will accept you as righteous in his sight." So they began preaching a gospel contrary to the gospel Paul preached, which was really no gospel at all that they were preaching. What happens is, as they began to add on these works to the gospel... By the way, this has gone ever since in the church.

Just about the majority of denominations, especially here in America, as you get into every world religion, are preaching a gospel of works that you need to either adhere to certain acts of penance in order to be justified before God. You need to adhere to these sacraments in order to be justified before God. You need to enter into these ceremonial rituals before God will even listen to you and all these prerequisites that are put on top of faith in Jesus Christ, ever since. There was an attack on Paul's gospel from day one. There's an attack on the church, as we know it, even today.

Paul comes out in chapter 1. Now he writes to these Galatians, and he says, "Listen. Let me tell you the very first thing you need to know. If *anybody* comes to you preaching a message other than the one you heard from me, which, by the way, was a message I received directly from Jesus Christ himself, if anybody, even an angel (in Upstate New York) were to come to you and tell you a gospel that is different than the one the apostle Paul preached..."

On that day, when those churches were established, Paul says this, and this is the strongest language in the entire book of Galatians, "Then that brother is to be accursed. He is to be judged. That brother is not a believer in Jesus Christ. He is not saved because the gospel he is preaching to you isn't a gospel that came from Christ himself. It's a gospel that originated from man that would encourage you to put your trust in your own religious deeds in addition to trust in the Savior."

Paul says, and his intent, therefore, in that, is the rest of this letter in Galatians is going to unpack what the gospel of Jesus Christ is as a reminder to them. Because Paul says, in chapter 3, they had been bewitched; they had been turned away. Paul then continues in chapter 1, and he shares with them how the gospel demonstrated itself in his own testimony. This one man who was once a Christian killer, as the apostle Paul was, now, by the gospel of Jesus Christ, had transformed his life and had set him on a completely different trajectory, winning as many people to Christ as he can. The gospel was demonstrated in Paul's life.

In chapter 2, Paul then shows how this gospel he was preaching, it wasn't just something he made up, but was actually affirmed in Jerusalem by James, John, and Peter, three of the primary apostles who walked with Jesus Christ, who understood the gospel. This gospel that Paul was preaching was affirmed by them according to the revelation that had been given to them and how the gospel was not predicated upon you having to first become a Jew in adherence to law before you can have faith in Jesus Christ. This whole thing, because the gospel was based upon faith, it's accessible to anybody, Jew or Gentile.

Then, in chapter 2, verse 16, Paul throws down the benchmark theme (not only of the book of Galatians but really of the entire understanding of salvation according to the gospel) when he said, in verse 16 of chapter 2, "A man is not justified by the works of the law but by faith. Faith alone." I don't know if you caught that. That's a profound statement right there, but that statement alone, right there, the fact that you are not justified, you are not saved by the righteous works of the law of your own flesh but rather by faith in Jesus Christ, that statement, right there, just offended traditional Catholicism. It just offended Mormonism. It just offended Islam.

It just offended probably 60 percent of the denominations, especially in the South, who love legalism and performing and behaving a certain way in order for God to love you and accept you, and probably offended many of you in this room. The idea you are saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ alone, period. Regardless of your past, regardless of your testimony, when you trust in Jesus Christ, he, and he alone, is what grants salvation. Paul says, "Your acceptance for a holy God isn't dependent upon your works. It's dependent upon faith in Christ."

What I love about Paul is, in chapter 3, it almost says he anticipates the questions that are now going to come from some of these Judaizers. I call this kind of the "*Yeah, but...*" chapter. It's the, *Yeah, I know Jesus Christ is who need to put our faith in, but...*, or, *Yeah, I know Jesus is our Messiah. He is the only Savior, but...* It's like Paul anticipates these arguments coming in, and so what he does in chapter 3 is he lays down 3 primary proofs that salvation is by faith in Jesus Christ alone. These are the three proofs (we've already seen two of them): In verses 1-5, the *experience of the Galatians* was proof of salvation by faith alone.

If you noticed in verses 1-5, every verse ended with a question mark. It's because Paul was doing an introspective study on these believers, asking them, "Hey, let's look at your own life and start drawing some conclusions." Paul says to the Galatians, in verses 1-5, "How were you first saved, Galatian churches? Was it by the works of your hands, or was it by faith in Jesus Christ? The answer: faith in Jesus Christ. So how have you been bewitched to believe differently? It's by faith in Jesus Christ. You don't have to look any further than how you first came to Christ when I was with you. That's how salvation was accomplished."

In verses 6-9, we saw the *testimony of Abraham*, right? This becomes important that Paul would use Abraham as an argument of salvation by faith. I heard one pastor say one time, "You know, if you're going to argue with a Methodist, you better be able to quote Wesley. If you're going to argue with a Lutheran, you better be able to quote Luther. If you're going to argue with a Calvinist, you better be able to quote Calvin, and if you're going to argue with a Jew, you better quote Abraham." Because to the Jew, Abraham is the forefather of their faith whom God delivered the initial promises to, who the nation of Israel was birthed through; it was through Abraham.

So Paul is going to use this Abrahamic argument that Abraham was saved by faith, not by works. We saw that last week. Abraham's whole life revolved around faith. He left home by faith. He had a child in old age by faith. He almost sacrificed that child by faith, and then, ultimately, in Genesis 15:6, Abraham was justified. He was declared righteous. He was saved by faith, which righteousness was then credited to his account. Abraham's whole life, 430 years, before the law even came on the scene, Abraham was saved by faith. Paul is basically arguing, "If you're going to be a true child of Abraham, then you better follow in the means of salvation that Abraham followed, which was by faith alone apart from works."

But what happens, and we'll see tonight, is the natural question evolves... *What about the law?* What about the law? Why was the law given if it can't save? Why was, for years, the nation of Israel told to adhere to (and we know them as the Ten Commandments) these laws if they can't save? Why were they put there in the first place? We're going to look at this in verses 10-14, just 5 verses tonight. Chandler will pick up here in a couple of weeks on verse 15 and following.

But if you'll notice in verses 10-14, each verse contains an Old Testament quotation. If you have an NAS Bible, it's in all caps. If it's an ESV Bible, they're in quotation marks. Each verse has a quotation from your Old Testament because what Paul is going to do is he is going to say, "All right, let's the law speak for itself. Let's let the law testify as to whether the law can actually save you, and let's go to your Old Testament."

In verse 10, was the law intended to save you and make you justified before a holy God? Was that the intent of the law? In other words, can you and I, in this room, tonight, stand before God and give a defense of why we should be made righteous in his sight, why we should be saved, simply because we got 6 or 7 out of 10 right on the commandments? Can we stand before God and give the defense that it's because we were baptized when we were 5, and that act alone is what did it?

Can we stand before God in defense and say, "Man, it's because I threw some money in an offering plate, and that's why I should be declared righteous in your sight"? Are those things enough that you can rely on the works of the law in order to save you? Let's see what verse 10 says. **"For all who rely on the works of the law are..."** Saved? No. **"...under a curse..."** Did you catch that? Again, another profound statement here.

The apostle Paul just said, "Not only does the law not have the ability to save you, but in all reality, to those of you who are actually going to use your own performance as a means by which you're going to try to earn your salvation before God..." Paul says, "Not only will that not save you, but actually that will bring a curse upon your life. That will bring a curse upon your life. Your deeds of morality as a means of salvation will actually, one day, be used to testify against you in God's court of law."

Now that's a powerful statement. Paul comes right out of the gate holding no punches, "The works of the law can't save you. They actually curse you." Keep going, though, here because, at the end of verse 10, Paul uses a quote from Deuteronomy 27 to explain why that is. He says, **"...for it is written, 'Cursed be everyone who does not abide by...'"** most of the **"...things written in the Book of the Law, and do them."** Is that what that says? What does it say? *All* of them.

Man, this changes the game, by the way, when you start understanding this. When you understand Deuteronomy 27, and it says, "Cursed is everyone who doesn't abide by *all* of the law," not just *some* of it, this changes the game because now, all of a sudden, we're not playing percentages anymore, right? How many times have you or someone you've known said, "If I had to stand before God and give some sort of defense, I'd say, 'Well, I've been more good than I've been bad'"?

Well, according to Deuteronomy 27, that doesn't count..."more good than bad." First of all, we have a whole argument on what your definition of *good* is, but in reality, the Scriptures doesn't say, "Get most of them right." The Scriptures say, "All of them or else a curse is on your life." If you've broken one, you've broken them all. Let's take a quick timeout here for a second. I just want to recap. What does Paul mean, by the way, just so we're clear on what the law is? So let's just start at a starting place.

Most of us think of the Ten Commandments, right, as kind of the Law of God over the nation of Israel? So remember Exodus, chapter 20. God has delivered the Israelites out of Egypt, parted the Red Sea, came in, closed it in on the enemies, and is about to take them into the Promised Land, but before they do, God pulls Moses up on the top of a mountain, on top of Mount Sinai, in Exodus, chapter 20. He, then, lays down and carves in stone 10 commandments that are to govern the nation of Israel on how they're to live.

Exodus 20:20 tells us the reason the commandments were given were for a test for the nation. They were to serve as a test for the nation. So in the spirit of testing, let's test the Ten Commandments real quick. Just a quick straw poll of how we're doing just on the 10. Let's start backwards and count our way down. "Top Ten," David Letterman, here we go. Ten, right?

10. *How many of you have ever wanted what others have?* Done. We're hosed right there. Let's entertain this. Let's go to number nine.

9. *How many of you ever said something untrue about someone else?* The rest of you are liars already.

8. *How many of you have taken something that's not yours?* You remember being a kid, going to the grocery store, and those little Brach's candy displays, remember those? You're supposed to take a nickel and drop it in there, and then you can take one. And so we all did the fake nickel while everybody looking at us, huh? Then you took a whole scoop. I know how that plays out.

Number seven and number six will probably narrow the field a little bit.

7. *How many have cheated on the spouse?* Or...

6. *How many have murdered someone?* Now if you've done the latter on the murder there, just we'll visit with you afterwards if you have not confessed that properly. I would imagine the vast majority in here haven't cheated on a spouse or haven't (doesn't mean it hasn't happened in here, for sure) murdered somebody, necessarily. But hold tight on those because Jesus is going to get to those in a little bit.

5. *Disrespecting your mom or dad.* Right? Sure. We've all punked Mom and Dad many, many times.

4. *How many have you gone an entire week without resting?* Well, we just broke the Sabbath.

3. *How many have said God told us to do something when, in actuality, he never did?* Do you know that's what it means to take God's name in vain? It doesn't mean to put a cuss word after God's name. It means when you literally make an oath and say God told you to do it when God never did. That is taking, using his name in vain, and that is rampant, sometimes, in the Baptist culture. *Man, the Lord just told me... Did he really? Are you sure? Are you sure that's not just hunger pangs? Are you sure about that?* All of us have probably fallen into that at some point.

2. *How many have fashioned an image of something into an idol?* Whether that is a physical fashioning of an idol or whether that's something in our minds or our hearts.

1. *How many have then worshipped that idol above God?*

I mean you go through these. Now let me just say something real quick. If there is anybody in here who has kept all ten of these perfectly, I would just love you to stand up right now so we could worship while you're in here this room together, as God. The reality is, is no. I mean you start going through those and you realize, *Man, I'm hosed. If I've broken one, I've broken them all.*

But hang in there. It actually gets worse because what happens is in the very next book, in Leviticus, we find out there's not actually just 10 commandments, but the nation of Israel actually was governed by 613 commandments that were given by God, not only moral laws, but we also had civil laws governing how you pay your taxes. We had dietary laws that determined whether you could ribs and shrimp. We had ceremonial laws determining how you need to bathe and when that needs to happen (some of you have already violated that tonight; you need to repent probably) or what feasts and festivals, holy days, we need to adhere to.

You start going through this, and you realize, *There is just no way. If this is what it takes to be saved (I have to not just play the percentages on this, but I actually have to do all of these), then I'm hosed.* Then hang

on because it gets even worse after that in Matthew, chapter 5, when Jesus comes along and takes the law and actually turns it completely upside down and blows our paradigms.

Remember those two laws that probably the least of us have committed...murdering somebody and maybe cheating on a spouse? Jesus comes along and takes those very two in Matthew, chapter 5, and says, "You know, you say you've never had adultery. Have you ever lusted after somebody? Have you ever looked at another woman or another man with intent for them? Then I tell you, you've committed adultery. You say you have never murdered anybody. Have you ever felt anger towards somebody? Because if you've felt anger towards somebody, I tell you, you've committed murder in your heart."

Now this blows everything up because you recognize this is no longer just about doing these things or not doing these things. It's an issue of the heart. We're all hosed at this point, and so you feel the weight of this. This is what Paul is talking about here, and using Deuteronomy, he's saying if you're going to use your own performance as a means of salvation, then you have to obey perfectly, 100 percent of the time, always.

And when you fail (notice I didn't say *if*) yet you continue to use your performance as a means to justify you before God, God will actually, in a day of judgment, one day, take your failed track record and actually use it against you for your own condemnation, thereby cursing you, heaping wrath upon you. Paul's conclusion in verse 10 is the law not only doesn't save, but it actually curses the more you try to use it as a means of salvation.

While I'm here, real quick, let me just very quickly, unpack one other note of importance concerning why God even gave the law to begin with. Matt will drill down on this here in a couple of weeks, but two things you realize about why God gave the law:

1. *It was never meant to be a checklist of moral code, but rather it was meant to be a comprehensive picture of the character of God.* The law was more than just *dos* and *don't dos*. The law was a picture of the absolute holiness of who God is, and so one thing you realize about the law, the law wasn't man-made. Man-made laws are legislation that get passed down to us out of Washington or Austin here, right? And are given and interpreted by flawed men. Anybody have any pushback against that in Capitol Hill? That happens.

When you realize that, in a sense, they're doing the best they can to provide some laws to try to govern a public society and keep us within some boundaries of health and safety, but we don't always get it right. Therefore, at the end of the day, for us, they can be just moral checklists for us to do, but when God gave the law, it was God-originated, not man originated. It was more than just a regulation checklist. It was God



capturing his personhood in pen and ink for us, and so you have a more robust picture of what the law is in that. We also realize when the law was given...

2. *It was never given with the intention to save.* That's a misnomer amongst a lot of people. *The law was given so I would do this, and I would be saved.* It was never given as a means to be saved. It was given, rather, to show you your need for a Savior. Exodus 20:20 again, "I'm giving this as a test for you knowing you're going to fail this test." The intention of the law was it was meant to bring you to the end of yourself, to this realization, *I needed something or someone outside of myself to save me, to either do this for me or take the wrath for me, but I needed something outside of myself to save me because my own hands can't do it.*

Yet for these Judaizers, and the Pharisees who preceded them, and the denominations in our Christian culture who have come in the years since, and even, again, for many of us in this room, we have a tendency in our flesh to see this law and, rather than coming to the end of ourselves, actually have this desire to want to push the pedal even harder. The pride wells up. *I'm going to do these things, and God will accept me if I can do all these things,* but we can never do it. Our flesh convinces us.

I know Matt said this a hundred times, but I imagine, in this room, right now, there are some of you who are absolutely, right now, just exhausted because you have been on this performance treadmill for so long trying to earn the favor and acceptance of God based upon your own performance, and you're just exhausted. You're wiped out, if truth be known. Man, you're tired, because it's a no-win situation. You'll never do it. You can't, not in this body, not on this side of heaven. You can't.

According to verse 10, though, it doesn't work that way. If that's what you're pursuing for your justification, you're hosed. You're without hope, and more than that, the more you press into that pedal, the more you try to pursue the works of your own flesh, the more wrath you're storing up for yourself on that day of judgment. It'll only serve to condemn you and testify against you of how you couldn't do it.

However, in verse 11, there's some good news because what the law does teach us is what does save, and that's faith. Look at this in verse 11: **"Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.'"** That's a quote, by the way, from Habakkuk, chapter 2, which, in Hebrew, literally says, "The one who by faith is made righteous will live." In other words, if you want to be made righteous before God, receive eternal life to be justified, declared righteous before a holy God, it isn't going to come by the own works of your hands.

It's going to come by faith alone. In other words, you're going to have to turn away from yourself and turn to someone or something else who is going to be able to do it for you because you can't. You're going to

be made righteous by trusting in someone else, not you. You can't do it. Keep going. Verse 12: **"But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them.'"** That's just reiterating what we've talked about.

Here he quotes Leviticus, and, in other words, the law taught this: If you're going to live by the law, you're going to have to practice the whole thing, but what happens is, when you actually start practicing the law as a means of salvation, who are you trusting in for your righteousness? Yourself. Yet Habakkuk just told us, in Habakkuk, chapter 2, the righteous man is made righteous by faith, by trusting in someone else, not himself, so you're competing against the Scriptures here.

The law teaches true righteousness, true salvation, comes not from human performance but by trusting in someone or something else, as we'll soon see here in verse 13. Who is it we need to put our faith in? Who is that perfect substitute who not only embodied the law perfectly without sin but also took on the curse of our disobedience for us? Who is it, church? Say it loud. Who is it? Christ. Christ, according to 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'..."** Christ redeemed us when he hung on that cross.

Verse 10, by the way, told us we are under the law, and anyone under the law is cursed, but now, in verse 13, we see Christ has redeemed us from the curse, not only taking the curse from us but actually putting it on himself. Incidentally, why would the Scriptures here say, "Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree"? What would be so cursed about a tree? And remember, this is Old Testament. We haven't gotten to the Roman culture of the New Testament. This is Old Testament. What does the Old Testament have to say about being hung on a tree? Why is that such a bad deal?

What you realize, in your Old Testament, the only people who were hung on trees as a means of death were the vilest people against God. Three specific camps you see in your Old Testament. You see, first of all, *enemies of God* in the book of Joshua who are hung on trees or hung on posts. You see also, *traitors against God*. In other words, people like Absalom who were pierced and then hung. You also see *covenant breakers*...Saul's children who broke their covenant with the Gibeonites if they wouldn't attack them, but they did, and they were hung on a tree.

Then it was only later the Romans would come in and take this to a whole nother level, when they would introduce crucifixion and the idea of taking your sin and your crimes and putting them on display publicly to shame you and instill fear in the community not to do what you did. Those were the kind of people, though, who died on trees: enemies of God, covenant breakers, traitors. People just like us. Those are the ones.

There's one other, though, who died in your New Testament. Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ, who committed no crimes, was perfectly obedient to and representative of the law, became our substitute by hanging on that tree and thereby taking our curse, which we deserved, on himself. Our righteousness comes through our faith in a substitute, not in our own works, and so that's why, in verse 14 (and we'll wrap up here), it's our faith in Jesus and his act on that cross that actually cleanses us and makes us righteous before God.

Listen to this, and just grasp this in verse 14: Christ redeemed us, in verse 13, **"...so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."** Let me let you feel the weight of that a bit more. I want to read that verse again, and where it says, **"...the Gentiles..."**, put your name in there. **"...so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to..."** me, to Shea Sumlin, **"...so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith."** Do you feel the weight of that?

Our trust is not in our own works to earn our own salvation. You can't. It's already been proven. Your faith has to come in someone else who could live that life you could not live and would take upon the penalty you deserved. We, then, transfer that faith from us to him, to Jesus Christ, and it's through him, that original promise to Abraham. Remember? Genesis 15:6: "Abraham believed, and it was credited to him as righteousness." What did he believe? He believed the promise, one day, his descendants would outnumber the stars in the universe, the sand on the seashore. I mean one day the blessing seed would come whom would make all the nations happy, and that was Jesus Christ.

So it's in Christ, the fulfillment of the Abrahamic promise, that promise is given to you and to me, and we can stand righteous before a holy God even though we're not and feel his acceptance, not based upon our own performance but based upon what Jesus did for us. Can Paul be anymore clear? Can we beat this horse anymore? It's repetitive, over and over: You're not saved by your own flesh. Verses 1-5, Galatians: *How are you saved?* By faith. Verses 6-9: *How is Abraham saved?* Through faith. Verses 10-14: *How does the law save?* By showing you your need for a Savior because you couldn't fulfill it and, therefore, putting your trust and hope in someone else, Jesus Christ, God's provision for our sin.

Let me just ask you right now, what are you living by right now? Are you living by the works of your flesh in order to justify yourself before God, or are you living by a full, robust faith in Jesus Christ, for who he is and what he did for you? Now let me just shoot you straight. I know what the answer is, right? We're in the Bible Belt of the South. I know what you'll say. I'm asking you, where is the evidence?

Aside from your own confession, if we were to take your life and put it out on display for the rest of the non-believing world around us, can they look at your life? Can they look at my life? Can they look at the way we think, our activity, and is it communicating a message that we are bought in to Jesus Christ, hook,

line, and sinker; we cannot earn our own salvation; we're living by faith? Or are we really just playing magic tricks with our language? We'll say we love and follow Jesus, but in all reality, our faith is in ourselves hoping and feeling, *Maybe if we just do this, God will love me. Maybe if I don't do this, then I'll be accepted in God's sight.* That's not how the law works.

Matt will dive in here in the next couple of weeks and show you the significance of the law in the life of a believer now and what obedience looks like as a *get to* and not a *have to*. The reality is (and you've heard me say it before), there is nothing you can do to make God love and accept you anymore than he already does, and there is nothing you can do to make God love you or accept you any less than he already does. He loves you perfectly and sufficiently in Jesus Christ.

If you're in this room this evening and you have not put your faith in Jesus Christ, it's only going to get louder as we go through Galatians for you. I just encourage you to surrender. Get off the treadmill. You can't earn it. Jesus Christ paid it for you. Come now to living water that can quench your soul's thirst in a way that nothing else ever has, to where you can find rest and peace for your soul as Jesus promised versus the exhaustion of your own treadmill performance.

Those of you, those of us in here, and, I gather, the vast majority who have put our faith in Jesus Christ, let's do this: Let's take the next few moments, as the band comes out here. Let's worship. Let's sing, and let's praise Jesus, the Author and Perfecter of our faith, who, day by day, is strengthening that faith so we might fully depend and trust in him knowing he will finish what he started. Let's pray, and let's worship and sing together.

Father, we praise your name, that Father, you didn't just leave us here to try to figure out how to obey 613 commands that are really greater than that. Commands that are really an issue of the heart. We confess we have all fallen short, and we are in need of your sovereign grace. I pray, where there are some in here, right now, who do not know you, who are trusting in their own works in order to earn their salvation, God, you would tear that down, tonight would be the night they would surrender all, they would put their faith in Jesus Christ, trust him and him alone, and rest.

For those of us who have done that God, would you fill our hearts right now, Spirit, stir in our hearts, to bring a great joy and peace that you have secured us. You have purchased us by the blood of your Son, Jesus Christ, and you have sealed us with your Holy Spirit. You will finish what you began in our lives, and we can trust you for that. Help us to walk out of here in confidence, not in our own flesh but in the Spirit of God, and it's in Jesus' name we pray, amen.