

## OUT WITH THE OLD, IN WITH THE NEW (GALATIANS 3:1-22)

Decluttering Christianity series @ Grace Community Church | BY DAVID HILLIS, 19 MAY 2019

- I. How many of you did some *spring cleaning* this spring? Went through the house to clean out and declutter, get rid of some stuff?
  - A. For some people, there's nothing more stressful (*or boring*) than going through closets and cleaning stuff out to give away,
    1. but I bet for some of you, getting rid of a bunch of that stuff feels awesome! Right?
  - B. **[MINIMALISM]** A couple of months ago I was at home and watched the documentary *Minimalism*,
    1. about these two young guys who got tired of all the *stuff*, all the things they were accumulating
      - a) and just started deciding, what do I really *need* in life?
    2. *They* did a spring cleaning that was the *ultimate!*
      - a) Each of these guys pared down to almost *nothing*
      - b) and found real life and joy in this different lifestyle,
      - c) and then found *each other* and have teamed up to help others who want to do the same.
      - d) Interesting movie! Info about it at MyG. **[MyG-SERMON]**
    3. I can't go as far as *they did* I don't think,
      - a) but I did see the overstuffed bookshelf in the room where the TV was playing that day, and took my feelings out on it.
      - b) Books stuck there we've held onto for years that we don't read, but didn't want to let go of,
        - (1) and I pretty much got rid of all of *mine* at least.

4. I'd love to do that more, because stuff just keeps coming into our houses, doesn't it?
  - a) There's an old saying "*out with the old, in with the new,*" which is a good one if you can actually *follow it*.
    - (1) You know, every time you buy something new, you let it replace what had served that purpose before?
    - (2) By giving it away, rather than hanging onto it, whether it's a cell phone, TV, pots and pans, clothes or shoes?
  - b) But it's *hard*, right?
    - (1) *At least* until the clutter just *gets to you* and you ask yourself "what am I *doing* hanging *onto* all this stuff?"
- C. The longer we are alive, the more *stuff* most people tend to *hang onto*, and through this series *Decluttering Christianity* we've discovered how we tend to do that with *faith*, too.
  1. We kind of understand that we can't *earn* our salvation, it's a gift God gives to all who place their trust in Christ and His grace.
  2. But over time if we're not careful, in our desires to surrender to God and live by Christ's example,
    - a) we can fall into a trap of seeing our faith or projecting to others that our faith is about keeping the rules, following a bunch of dos and don't's;
    - b) go to church, read your Bibles, don't smoke, don't chew, don't hang around those who do!
- II. But today, as we look at the next piece of the book of Galatians, we're going to see Paul explain something that *might* surprise you.
  - A. **We don't please God by being rule breakers or rule keepers ...**

1. Trying to follow God's Law never has drawn God closer to anyone, any more than ignoring it.
  2. So when it came to the Law, we'll see with Paul this approach of "out with the old, in with the new."
- B. [GAL 3:19abc,24-25] Paul actually told the Galatians that God's Law was a *temporary one* for them to live under.
1. God only intended that it be around until Jesus, the one He had promised would come and fulfill the Law.
  2. And Paul *wasn't* speaking out of turn!
- C. [MT 5:17] *Jesus Himself* told everyone that He didn't *abolish* the law, but He did *fulfill* it."
1. So what does that mean? π
  2. What's the difference between *abolishing* it and *fulfilling* it?
  3. What point was He trying to make by calling out the difference?
- D. [ROM 10:4, HEB 8:13] The Bible says God's Law recorded in the Old Testament is now *over, obsolete!*
1. What does *that* mean?
  2. Some have thought that it means we can just *disregard* all of God's Law, at least in the Old Testament. That it's not authoritative anymore.
    - a) Is that really true?
    - b) In the years after Paul died, a guy by named Marcion started teaching this, and he was wholeheartedly denounced by the Church as teaching heresy!

- E. You may feel that *most* Christians instead are *cherry-picking* whatever laws in the Old Testament they don't think should live by because "they don't apply anymore,"
1. and that can feel *even more confusing or unsettling*, right?
    - a) Have you ever felt this way?
    - b) Had questions as to why you still should follow certain rules God gave in the Old Testament Law, but not others? π
  2. I mean, I *understand* there are some things in these Jewish Scriptures that are unsettling.
    - a) Some are downright *illegal* today, like killing your kids for talking back and being disrespectful? π
    - b) Come on, we've all *thought about it* as parents at times (if you haven't, wait til they become *teenagers!*)
      - (1) but none of us think *seriously* that we *should!* (*Right?!!*)
    - c) **[DEUT 21:18-21]** Yet one of the 613 laws found there in the Jewish Scriptures says to stone such kids to death.
  3. Others require we circumcise every guy, not touch dead bodies, and put to death anyone found guilty of rape, adultery, homosexual acts or even sex before marriage.
    - a) The Law had over *2 dozen* offenses that called for the death penalty.
  4. So *who* gets to decide *today* which of the 613 rules you can ignore, and which ones you *can't*?
    - a) *That* seems even *more* problematic.
    - b) In fact, this whole "*out with the old, in with the new*" and *who decides* what stays and goes can shake some people's faith.

- c) People like atheist Richard Dawkins point to these laws to say they think Christianity is either barbaric or inconsistent.

(1) So are they *right*?

- F. Well, let's jump back into Galatians and see what it teaches about all these laws from long ago, and what they mean to us today.
  - 1. Galatians 3, I'll read this from the ERV today. [TURN]
  - 2. Last week we skipped over this section and went to the end of the chapter for Mother's Day, but check this out, v1.

### III. Paul proves the Good News replaces the Old Testament Law...

#### 1. Through personal experience. (Galatians 3:1-5)

A. [READ GAL 3:1-2, ERV]

B. He's talking to them about letting go of the old (the Law) and embracing the new, the Good News by pointing to their own lives.

C. He's bringing up the Holy Spirit, because Paul *knew* that they had had an experience with the Holy Spirit when they said "yes" to the Good News, Christ's gift of grace,

1. and he says if that hadn't been good enough, God wouldn't have accepted you by giving you His Spirit.

D. [GAL 3:5, ERV] He points out in v5 the *miracles* they had seen God do,

1. the incredible ways the Spirit was working through them — proof that God was blessing them and their new faith.

2. And he's like, "why do you think *now* you have to do more for God to accept you?"

- E. But he says “don’t just trust your own experiences, trust what the Jewish Scriptures *say* about themselves!”

#### IV. Paul proves the Good News replaces the Old Testament Law...

##### 2. Through the Old Testament Scriptures. (Galatians 3:6-18)

A. [READ GAL 3:6-9, ERV]

B. Get this! He’s basically saying, God’s ultimate plan was for us to live by faith *anyway*, not the Law.”

- 1. He’s showing here how God accepted Abraham by *faith*, not by following the Law which (v17 says) didn’t even exist yet!

C. [GAL 3:8, ERV] Look back at v8.

1. The very Scriptures that contained God’s Law *looked forward to a time when the Law would no longer be necessary,*

a) because *anyone* would be able to find relationship with God through faith in Christ!

2. The law was *always* meant to be a *temporary, stopgap* measure.

a) It says in v24 (as we saw last week) that the Law was like a temporary guardian until we could experience faith through Christ and have God’s Spirit live within us, guiding us each day.

D. Well then, you might ask as they did, why did God give the Law in the *first place*?

#### V. Paul proves the Good News replaces the Old Testament Law...

##### 3. By explaining the real purpose for the Law. (Galatians 3:19-4:4)

- A. [READ GAL 3:19, ERV]
- B. He says the Law wasn't *bad*; it just wasn't enough because we couldn't keep it.
1. The Law pointed out people's sins, and helped preserve order.
    - a) The Law, like the laws in our city and country, are required to help preserve order, identify lawbreakers.
    - b) For them, it was their constitution, their governing document as they made themselves into a nation.
  2. So it curbed people's desire to do whatever they wanted, but it didn't make people good.
- C. For example, there's a reason you don't speed badly.
1. Notice that I didn't say "you don't speed." I said that there's a reason that you don't speed badly (*probably*), and you only creep a little bit above the limit.
  2. And what's that reason? Because you're righteous? You enjoy obeying the law?— No. You just don't want a ticket.
  3. Speed limit laws don't make you a better person; they don't change your heart, though they might show you how calloused your heart is!
- D. And that is what the Law does:
1. it points out to you what the boundaries are and keeps you more or less in check, out of fear of the repercussions.
  2. God saw that, until He could deliver on His promise to Abraham, until *Christ* could come, His fickle people needed boundaries.
  3. There needed to be a stopgap solution, including some sort of government with laws to keep them civil.

4. Rules aren't essentially bad; they just don't have power to transform people from the inside out.
    - a) If you work in law enforcement, you know this.
    - b) If you have raised children, you know this!
- E. **[GAL 3:25 ERV, ROM 7:4, 10:4]** So Paul says when you accept Christ, you are actually released from the Law.
1. It's "out with the old"!
    - a) It's not needed to *justify* you, to save you.
    - b) In the book of Hebrews, it says the Law is now *obsolete*.
  2. God does the heavy lifting, by putting His Spirit inside us to soften, change our hearts.
  3. But I need to wrap back around here by showing you *exactly* what Hebrews says, so it provides a context for what Paul has said today in Galatians 3.
    - a) That way we will have the right perspective, and we can answer some of those hard questions we talked about earlier.

## VI. Paul proves the Good News replaces the Old Testament Law...

**4. But that *doesn't* mean the Law has no value anymore! (Hebrews 8:7-13)**

A. **[READ HEB 8:7-13]**

B. What I just read to you is *actually* a *quote* out of the Old Testament, in Jeremiah 31;

1. God had told them this day would come, centuries before Christ came.

- C. The old Law would then be *obsolete*, which meant what?
1. God wouldn't use it anymore to judge us.
  2. There won't be a long list of dos and don'ts anymore to follow in order to be accepted by God.
  3. There won't be a fear of judgment when we fail, because there is no fear in love.
  4. There won't be a need to offer sacrifices to God when we fail, because Christ replaces all that by *being* the sacrifice for all our sins.
- D. Notice God said it would be obsolete, but it hadn't *disappeared!*
1. God said "I'll put my laws in your *hearts.*"
    - a) In other words, you won't be doing them to avoid judgment, but you will be doing so out of a heart of love for God, to live in a way that draws your heart closer to His.
    - b) You will follow the Law not to *be* accepted by God, but *because you are* accepted by God and want to become more like Him.
    - c) Not to be *justified*, but to be *sanctified*, to use those words again!
    - d) Motivated by love, and wanting Christ in the center, not your own selfish desires anymore, which we'll see in the final week next week.
  2. **So to finish our big idea today, We don't please God by being rule breakers or rule keepers ... but by inviting Christ to rule in our hearts.**
- E. The Law doesn't disappear, we don't throw it out, because it's still a useful reference.

1. From it we come to know God's character; we understand right from wrong, good from evil.

- a) In the New Testament, Paul referred back to it over and over to teach people how to live today!

F. So do we "cherry pick" out of the Old Testament, what we should and shouldn't follow?

1. Actually yes, but there is a very clear way in which to do so, that isn't subjective or based on what you want to follow or not!

2. It comes by understanding the 3 kinds of laws that God gave in the Old Testament: *civil laws, ceremonial laws, and moral laws.*

- a) I gave you a helpful articles in your sermon notes about this, I'd encourage you to dig into.

- b) You'll see these aren't my destinations, but ones as old as Christianity itself.

3. *Moral law* was the *heart* of the Law, which told people how God wants us to live.

- a) God said it was centered around "love God with all your heart" and "love your neighbor as yourself."

4. *Civil or judicial law* is what was built into the Law to be their governing laws, as a million-plus slaves became a new nation.

- a) It talked about how public health matters were to be handled (everything from diet to diseases), for instance,

(1) and what kinds of punishments would be meted out for crimes committed.

- b) So honor your father and mother was a *moral law*, but receiving the death penalty for not following it? That was a *civil law*, something the government was tasked to do at that time.

5. And *ceremonial law* had to do with how individuals atoned for their *own* sins. It was all the laws about priests, sacrifices and such, and making themselves clean before God.
6. **[MT 5:17]** *Jesus said, I didn't abolish the law, but I fulfilled it."*
  - a) He fulfilled the civil and ceremonial law by taking the penalty and being the ultimate sacrifice for all our sins.
    - (1) **[1JN 1:9, 2:1-2]** We don't follow those anymore because they were replaced by 1 John 1:9, we *confess* our sins to God, *repent* or *turn* from them, and they are gone!
  - b) In a *sense* Christ fulfilled the *moral* law as well, by keeping them all perfectly, every day, His entire life.
    - (1) But He didn't do so to *abolish* it, He said!
    - (2) The civil and ceremonial laws are no longer applicable or needed because we aren't living under the government of ancient Israel and Jesus has taken the penalty for all our sins.
    - (3) But Jesus didn't abolish God's moral law, which reminds us of His character, of right and wrong, good and evil, and that's why Hebrews says it hasn't disappeared.

## VII. So, "out with the old, in with the new"!

### A. So what's "out"?

1. The need to be perfect (which was impossible), or even the pressure to be.
2. The curse, the judgment we deserve for our sins.
3. The separation from God because of them, and the need to try to atone for them, rather than just asking for forgiveness.

### B. And what's "in"?

1. **[BIG IDEA]** A personal relationship with God, based on love and a never-ending supply of His grace, that comes by inviting Christ to rule in our hearts.
2. It isn't "*do whatever you want*," because God's Law being obsolete doesn't mean that God's character has changed!
  - a) But it means through your relationship with Him, He'll continue forming you as His character, His Law, and His plan for you is *imprinted* upon your heart.

**NEXT STEP:** Are there any areas of your life you have been more focused on being a rulekeeper than keeping Christ in the center of your heart? How has your being performance based hindered you from fully loving God and loving others, and how can your life now be different?

### **FOR MY PERSONAL TIME WITH GOD THIS WEEK:**

1. This week, in part 4 of *Decluttering Christianity*, Pastor Dave taught from [Galatians 3:1-22](#). As you read it carefully and prayerfully, ask God to show you any ways you might have been like the Galatians. What puzzles you? What makes you uncomfortable? What resonates with you that you need to take some time to talk to God about more?
2. In [Galatians 3:1-5](#), Paul chastises the Galatians for changing course midstream. While they initially accepted God's grace as a free gift, they were now trying to earn God's favor through their actions. What has been your experience with Christianity? Did you initially understand it as something based on faith or on rules? How has your perspective changed over the years? Do you feel like you still have to obey the rules in order to be acceptable to God? What are the things you do (or don't do) in order to obtain God's favor?
3. In order to more fully understand Galatians 3, we were also in [Hebrews 8:7-13](#). Take some time to study it, or read through [Hebrews 8-10](#) as it tries to provide a fuller picture of how Christ issued in a New Covenant, based on better promises. Paul wrote in [1 Timothy 1:9](#) that the Law was intended for the lawless and rebellious, not for those who seek to follow God. You can also read in Paul's letter

to the Romans about how we are no longer bound to the Law ([Romans 7](#)), and that sin's power is broken but still must not control how we live ([Romans 6](#)).

4. Read online some of the articles in the RESOURCES section Pastor Dave's sermon notes at [mygrace.church/messages](http://mygrace.church/messages) regarding "*Do we live by what's in the Old Testament, or not?*" They will help you understand the differences between the 3 types of Old Testament laws God gave, and why one of three is still very applicable and authoritative today.
5. To come to a good grasp of what this book teaches, consider reading Galatians each week of the series in a different Bible translation (the [New Living Translation](#), [English Standard Version](#), [Easy-to-Read Version](#), [New Century Version](#) and the [Message](#) are good options). As you read, pay attention to Paul's words and consider his motivations behind them.