

Living by Faith Contrasted With Living by Law

by Bob Hoekstra

The sermon contrasts living by faith with living by law, highlighting the curse of the law and the importance of depending on Christ's work for salvation.

Scripture: Habakkuk 2:4, Romans 1:16, Galatians 3:10-11, Galatians 3:13

Topics: "Faith Alone", "Justification By Faith"

Description

Bob Hoekstra preaches on the contrast between living by the law and living by faith, emphasizing that those who rely on human works to establish a relationship with God are under a curse, as they must fulfill all the requirements of the law perfectly. However, the curse is lifted through Christ, who redeemed us by becoming a curse for us on the cross. This gracious provision of salvation through faith in Christ reminds us that justification before God is not attained through the law but through faith in Jesus.

Transcript

For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for "The just shall live by faith." Yet the law is not of faith, but "The man who does them shall live by them." (Galatians 3:10-12)

In our previous meditation, we considered God's call to live by faith, given through the prophet Habakkuk. "Behold the proud, his soul is not upright in him; but the just shall live by his faith" (Habakkuk 2:4). We also looked at the first of three appearances of this quote in the New Testament. "For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ . . . for in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, "The just shall live by faith." (Romans 1:16-17). The second appearance is given in Galatians, where living by faith is contrasted with living by law.

This contrast between law and faith involves a curse that is related to the law. "For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse." The curse is upon those who attempt to establish an acceptable relationship with God based on human works, as measured by God's holy law. The accompanying Old Testament quote explains the curse. "For it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." The curse is that those who choose to live by human performance under the law must always accomplish everything the law commands. Performance of some of the law's demands some of the time is unacceptable. This comprehensive pressure requiring perfect performance may seem curse enough. Yet, the consequences of inevitable failure intensifies the

curse. This dreadful consequence can be seen in the reminder of the blessed remedy that God's grace provides. "Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, 'Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree')" (Galatians 3:13-14). Those who violate any portion of the law's demands deserve the judgment that Jesus took on the cross.

This gracious provision of salvation through the substitutionary death of Christ reminds us that faith, not law, is our abundant hope. "But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for 'The just shall live by faith.'" Faith involves depending upon the work of another, even Christ. Living by law is not living by faith. It is living by human performance. "Yet the law is not of faith, but "The man who does them shall live by them."

Dear Lord, I praise You for taking upon Yourself the curse of the law that I deserved. My heart exults that the just shall live by faith, not by human performance. Please teach me to live by faith and not by law, Amen.

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