

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 5/27/12
Galatians 3:13 “Remembering the One Who Died for Us”**1

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Main Idea: When we say that Jesus died for us, we’re saying that He died to provide something called redemption for us, and to appreciate what redemption is, we must grasp two truths presented in Galatians 3:13.

- I. We owed a debt.
 - A. God gave the Law.
 1. It shows us what sin is (Rom 7:7).
 2. It shows us that sin has a penalty (James 2:10-11).
 - B. We can’t keep the Law (Rom 7:14-24).
 1. We are slaves (14).
 2. We are prisoners (23).
- II. Christ paid our debt.
 - A. Redemption involves people.
 1. Christ is the Redeemer (Job 19:25; Gal 4:4-5).
 2. We are the redeemed (Titus 2:14).
 - B. Redemption involves a payment.
 1. According to the Law, the wages of sin is the death of the sinner (Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:20; Rom 6:23).
 2. At the cross, Jesus paid the ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim 2:5-6).
 - C. Redemption involves a price.
 1. He took our place (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24).
 2. He endured our curse (Gal 3:13).
 3. He shed His blood (Eph 1:7; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 1:5).
 - D. Redemption involves a purpose.
 1. We belong to the One who paid the price (1 Cor 6:19-20).
 2. We’ve been set free to serve Him (Gal 5:1, 13; Rev 5:9).

Make It Personal: There are only two options...

1. You can accept the One who became a curse.
2. You can experience God’s curse yourself.

Tomorrow is Memorial Day, a special day set aside for the purpose of remembering those who died for us serving our country. It’s good to remember the fact that others paid a price for the privileges we now enjoy.

It started as the result of the Civil War and was first known as Decoration Day, from the practice of decorating graves with flowers, flags, and wreath. Let me take a moment to take you back through the history of our country. It’s good to remember...

25,000 died in the Revolutionary War. Around 20,000 died in the War of 1812. Some 13,000 died in the Mexican-American War in the mid 1800s. A staggering number of 625,000 soldiers perished in the Civil War. 116,000 died in WWI. 405,000 died in WWII. 36,000 died in the Korean War. There were 58,000 in the Vietnam War. 4,400 died in Iraq since 2003. Thus far, around 1,900 have died in Afghanistan. Those numbers reflect only reported war deaths and exclude those wounded and/or missing.²

If you add them together you realize that over 1,200,000 Americans have shed their blood so that we might be here this morning. It’s good to remember the ones who died for us.

But this remembering raises an important question. On a hillside outside the city wall of Jerusalem in the year AD 30, Jesus the Messiah was nailed to a cross. And after

**Note: This is an unedited manuscript of a message preached at Wheelersburg Baptist Church. It is provided to prompt your continued reflection on the practical truths of the Word of God.

¹ For more on this text and topic, see the sermon series preached at WBC in 2004, “What Really Happened on the Cross?”

² http://www.militaryfactory.com/american_war_deaths.asp

hanging there for six hours, from 9 in the morning until 3 in the afternoon, He died, a spear in His side the guarantee. And the Bible says He died for us.

So the question is, what's the difference between remembering the ones who died for us and remembering the One who died for us? To put it another way, what makes Jesus' death different from the deaths of 1.2 million soldiers that we're remembering on Memorial Day? They died for us. Jesus died for us. What's the difference? When Jesus said to remember His death ("Do this in remembrance of me," 1 Cor 11:24), is that the same as remembering the soldiers who died for us?

You can be sure that Jesus died for us in a way that is distinct from any other death. And the appropriate response must be distinct, too. But how so?

I want to answer those questions this morning by taking you to a very significant verse, Galatians 3:13, where we'll see that in a word, the difference between Jesus' death and any other death is summed up in the word *redemption*.

Did you realize that Satan doesn't mind if people believe in Jesus? Why, he doesn't even mind if people believe in the death of Jesus, as long as their belief is void of the doctrine of redemption. And that's sadly the case all over the Bible belt.

Ask the average person on the street (or sadly, in many churches), "Why did Jesus die?" and you'll hear a host of answers, with vague sentiments about His love and His selfless example. But there's a word you won't hear them mention, and it's the word *redemption*.

If Satan can't prevent people from hearing about the cross, his strategy is to spread a distorted version of the cross, a *redemption-less* version.

Here is an example. Why did Jesus die? "Jesus died for us because we are so worthy and important to God." Satan doesn't mind if you believe that for he understands that "worthy" people don't think they need a redeemer.

Here's another example. "Jesus died to give us an example of how to be selfless. In this evil world, the only way good will ever win out is if good people choose to do what Jesus did at the cross, and love. So believe in Him. Be inspired by His cross. Love as He loved. The world will be a better place if we do." Again, Satan doesn't care if you remember Jesus' death in that way for he knows what so many today refuse to admit. We are not "good" people, not in God's eyes. We're sinners, and that means we need more than an example, we need *redemption*.

I'm frightened, beloved. What frightens me is that people can "accept Jesus" and "believe that He died for us," but if they have in mind one of these faulty or partial notions, then they have believed in a different Jesus and a deficient gospel and are *still condemned in their sins*. Yet to make matters even worse, they don't know it. They've had an "experience with Jesus," and they think they're okay. But they're still in their sins, still heading for hell, and still in desperate need of a redeemer.

So let's look carefully at what God's Word has to say about the death of Christ. According to Galatians 3:13, a transaction occurred at the cross called *redemption*.³ "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'"

³ The verb "redeem" occurs 120 times in the Bible. Interestingly, all but 8 appear in the Old Testament. The noun "redemption" appears 23 times.

There's what makes Jesus' death unique. When we say that Jesus died for us, we're saying that He died to provide something called redemption for us, and to appreciate what redemption is, we must grasp two truths.

I. Truth #1: We owed a debt.

To use the language of Galatians 3:13, we were under *the curse of the law*. What does that mean? We need some background.

Galatians is one of the earliest New Testament letters. Paul wrote it to rescue the churches in Galatia from one of Satan's most deadly weapons, teachers who creep inside churches and preach a different gospel. In this case, people known as the Judaizers were speaking up in church and saying, "So you believe in Jesus? That's fine, but it's not enough. If you want to be a real Christian, you need to keep the laws that Moses gave us, too." Like, getting circumcised, eating kosher foods, and so on.

It was nothing short of an assault on the sufficiency of Christ and His atonement. Is what Jesus did on the cross sufficient to save a sinner, or does a sinner need to add something to the work Christ accomplished on the cross? The thrust of the book of Galatians addresses that issue, showing that salvation is through Christ alone, apart from any human merit, by grace alone and not by law-keeping, and by faith alone, not works.

In chapter 3 Paul exposed the heart of the Judaizer fallacy. It had to do with their view of the law God gave Moses at Mount Sinai. He challenged the Galatians with a question in verse 2, "I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by observing the law, or by believing what you heard?" In verses 6-9, he then demonstrated that even the patriarch Abraham was made right with God, not by law keeping, but by faith.

Then Paul lowered the boom in verse 10, "All who rely on observing the law are under a curse, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.'" Under a curse? What kind of curse and why? To answer that we need to understand a couple of facts about the law.

A. God gave the Law. Yes, the law came from God and consequently, it is good. No, it's not good as a prerequisite for salvation, but God never gave it for that reason. Why then did God give it? Simply put, the law fulfills two God-given purposes.

1. *It shows us what sin is (Rom 7:7).* Paul's commentary in Romans 7 explains, verse 7, "What shall we say, then? Is the law sin? Certainly not! Indeed *I would not have known what sin was except through the law*. For I would not have known what coveting really was if the law had not said, 'Do not covet.'"

What does the law do? It's God's measuring stick. It shows us what sin is.

2. *It shows us that sin has a penalty (James 2:10-11).* Which sin? *Every sin*. James makes this clear in James 2:10-11, "For whoever keeps the whole law and yet stumbles at just one point is guilty of breaking all of it. For he who said, 'Do not commit adultery,' also said, 'Do not murder.' If you do not commit adultery but do commit murder, you have become a lawbreaker."

If God hadn't revealed the law we wouldn't have known these two things, but He did and now we do. We know what sin is—we see it in black and white terms. And we know that sin has a penalty—if a person violates just one stipulation from God's law, that makes him a *law-breaker*, and he's guilty and liable for punishment.

So God gave the law. That's fact #1. But our problem is fact #2...

B. We can't keep the Law (Rom 7:14-24). I know that lots of people think they'll make it to heaven because of their good deeds, and that they don't see themselves as *law-breakers*, but as *law-keepers*. But let's be honest with ourselves. Which one of us has kept God's law perfectly? Not a one. When we look at the law we see a constant reminder that we're *not* what we *should be*. That's the *curse of the law*.

Paul described it in Romans 7:14-24: "We know that the law is spiritual; but I am unspiritual, sold as a slave to sin. I do not understand what I do. For what I want to do I do not do, but what I hate I do. And if I do what I do not want to do, I agree that *the law is good*. As it is, it is no longer I myself who do it, but it is sin living in me. I know that nothing good lives in me, that is, in my sinful nature. *For I have the desire to do what is good, but I cannot carry it out*. For what I do is not the good I want to do; no, the evil I do not want to do—this I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want to do, it is no longer I who do it, but it is sin living in me that does it. So I find this law at work: When I want to do good, evil is right there with me. *For in my inner being I delight in God's law*; but I see another law at work in the members of my body, waging war against the law of my mind and *making me a prisoner of the law of sin at work within my members. What a wretched man I am!* Who will rescue me from this body of death?"

That was Paul's condition, my friend, Paul the man who zealously tried to keep God's law from birth. It's our condition, too. We can't keep it. The standard is too high. Indeed, because of our inability to keep God's law, two words describe the natural man.

1. *We are slaves (14)*. Slaves to sin. Sin is our master. And...

2. *We are prisoners (23)*. Prisoners of the law of sin at work in our members.

We know that in God's sight we aren't what we should be, we are what we shouldn't be, and we are powerless to change. We are under the *curse of the law*.

In order to appreciate what makes Jesus' death distinct from any other death, we must start here. Truth #1, we owed a debt. You'll never understand why Christ died if you don't grasp this. We owed a debt, a debt we could not pay.

II. Truth #2: Christ paid our debt.

Notice Galatians 3:13 again, "Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: 'Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.'" Just what is *redemption*? As we unpack this verse we discover four things about redemption. Redemption involves people, a payment, a price, and a purpose. First...

A. Redemption involves people. "Christ redeemed us," Paul declares. Redemption, then, is an activity involving a subject and an object. First, the subject...

1. *Christ is the Redeemer (Job 19:25; Gal 4:4-5)*. "Christ redeemed us."

Centuries before the cross Job went through one of the worst trials known to man. He lost his ten children to a storm, he lost his business and life savings to theft, he lost the support of his wife, and even lost his health. But he never cursed God. What sustained him? While covered with boils and sitting in ashes Job declared this conviction in Job 19:25, "*I know that my Redeemer lives, and that in the end he will stand upon the earth.*"

Job looked ahead to the coming Redeemer. We look back.

Paul identifies the Redeemer in Galatians 4:4-5, "But when the time had fully come, God sent his Son, born of a woman, born under law, *to redeem* those under law, that we might receive the full rights of sons." Notice who the Redeemer is. He's the Son of God who entered this world as a son born to a woman. He was born under the law, that is, as

One who subjected Himself to being a law-keeper. And He kept it perfectly! Christ is the Redeemer. He is the subject. Who is the object? Paul tells the Galatians...

2. *We are the redeemed (Titus 2:14)*. “Christ redeemed *us*.” Bible scholars debate who the “us” refers to in this verse. Is Paul referring to Jewish believers? Based on the mention of Gentiles in verse 14, I take the “us” to refer to *all* believers, Jew and Gentile alike. Verse 14—“*He redeemed us* in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit.”

So redemption is highly personal. It involves people, first the Redeemer and then the individuals He redeemed.

B. Redemption involves a payment. “Christ *redeemed us*.” It’s marketplace terminology. To “redeem” (Greek *exagorazo*) means “to buy back,” more specifically, “to buy back out of slavery by paying a price.”

Remember, because we are sinners we are slaves and prisoners to sin. What kind of payment can redeem one who is a slave and prisoner to sin? Psalm 49:7-9 declares, “No man can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for him— the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough— that he should live on forever and not see decay.” So no mere mortal can redeem another human being. The cost is too high.

Friends, this is serious...

1. *According to the Law, the wages of sin is the death of the sinner (Gen 2:17; Ezek 18:20; Rom 6:23)*. God set the wages back in the garden when He told Adam, “You must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it *you will surely die* (Genesis 2:17).” But, of course, Adam ate. And Adam died.

Ezekiel 18:20 declares, “The soul who sins is the one who will die.” Romans 6:23 announces, “For the wages of sin is death.” God says that where there is sin there must be death. And the debt must be paid.

That was our predicament, beloved. The human race was under the curse of divine justice. We had failed to keep God’s revealed standard and were faced with the inevitable consequence. The wages of sin is the *death of the sinner*.

That’s what makes the next sentence so astounding.

2. *At the cross, Jesus paid the ransom for sinners (Mark 10:45; 1 Tim 2:5-6)*. Let this sink in. The cross didn’t catch Jesus by surprise. In the final say He didn’t die merely because of the wicked choices of the Jewish leaders, Pilate, and the soldiers. It was God’s plan that He die. The Son of God came to earth to make a payment.

Before it ever happened Jesus made repeated predictions, like this one in Mark 10:33-34, “‘We are going up to Jerusalem,’ he said, ‘and the Son of Man will be betrayed to the chief priests and teachers of the law. They will condemn him to death and will hand him over to the Gentiles, who will mock him and spit on him, flog him and kill him. Three days later he will rise.’”

“You mean He *wanted* to die?” Yes. It’s why He left heaven. Mark 10:45—“For even the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and *to give his life as a ransom for many*.”

That’s why Christ came, to make a payment. The law-keeper chose to die in the place of law-breakers. No one caught Him off guard and no one forced His hand. The Scriptures emphasize this over and over. The Redeemer *gave Himself*:

-Galatians 1:4 “Who *gave himself for our sins* to rescue us from the present evil age, according to the will of our God and Father.”

-Galatians 2:20 “...I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and *gave himself for me.*”

-1 Timothy 2:5-6 “For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, *who gave himself as a ransom for all men....*”

What I’m sharing with you is Christianity 101, the doctrine of *substitutionary atonement*. At the cross the Redeemer died in the place of and to make a payment for sinners. Sadly, this doctrine is either glossed over or omitted altogether from pulpit after pulpit.

Some time ago I was preaching a funeral message, and the service was taking place at another church facility. I shared with the grieving family and friends the only message that can give eternal comfort, the message that Jesus Christ died and conquered death for every sinner who would repent and put their total trust in His crosswork. After the service ended, I was standing by the hearse as the congregation exited the building and headed for their cars. A person approached me, thanked me for the message, and said bluntly, “I used to go to that church. That’s the most gospel that’s been preached in that building for thirty years.” And the person walked away.

Friends, the fact that churches are drifting away from preaching the gospel is nothing new. Over a century ago, the preacher Charles Spurgeon had this to say in a sermon on Galatians 3:13, “The whole pith and marrow of the religion of Christianity lies in the doctrine of ‘substitution,’ and I hesitate not to affirm my conviction that a very large proportion of Christians are not Christians at all, for they do not understand the fundamental doctrine of the Christian creed; and alas! there are preachers who do not preach, or even believe this cardinal truth. They speak of the blood of Jesus in an indistinct kind of way, and descant upon the death of Christ in a hazy style of poetry, but they do not strike this nail on the head, and lay it down that the way of salvation is by Christ’s becoming a substitute for guilty man.”⁴

So allow me to strike the nail on the head. *Christ died for sinners!* This is the gospel. Two thousands years ago The Redeemer made a one time ransom payment, and the debt for sinners was paid in full.

Do you know what that means? It means that no matter what you’ve done, no matter how great your sin is, you can be set free from the bondage of your sin today!

Perhaps a simple children’s story will help. Little Tom carried his new boat to the edge of the river. He carefully placed it in the water and slowly let out the string. How smoothly the boat sailed! Tom sat in the warm sunshine, admiring the little boat that he had built. Suddenly a strong current caught the boat. Tom tried to pull it back to shore, but the string broke. The little boat raced downstream.

Tom ran along the sandy shore as fast as he could. But his little boat soon slipped out of sight. All afternoon he searched for the boat. Finally, when it was too dark to look any longer, Tom sadly went home.

A few days later, on the way home from school, Tom spotted a boat just like his in a store window. When he got closer, he could see -- sure enough -- it was his!

Tom hurried to the store manager: “Sir, that’s my boat in your window! I made it!”

⁴ Charles Spurgeon, *Twelve Sermons on the Passion and Death of Christ*, p. 62.

“Sorry, son, but someone else brought it in this morning. If you want it, you'll have to buy it for one dollar.”

Tom ran home and counted all his money. Exactly one dollar! When he reached the store, he rushed to the counter. “Here's the money for my boat.” As he left the store, Tom hugged his boat and said, “Now you're twice mine. First, I made you and now I bought you.”⁵

That's what Jesus did. First He made us. Then He bought us. Redemption involves a people and a payment.⁶

C. Redemption involves a price. And what exactly was the price of this payment? Paul says, “Christ redeemed us...*by becoming a curse for us.*” Here's the price Jesus paid for our redemption. He did three things.

1. *He took our place* (2 Cor 5:21; 1 Pet 2:24). As 2 Corinthians 5:21 explains, “God made him who had no sin *to be sin for us*, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God.” Peter put it thus in 1 Peter 2:24, “*He himself bore our sins in his body on the tree*, so that we might die to sins and live for righteousness; by his wounds you have been healed.”

So in paying our redemption price, Christ took our place. But there's more.

2. *He endured our curse* (Gal 3:13). He redeemed us from the curse of the law, our text states, *by* (here's the means by which He did it) *becoming a curse for us*. “Being made a curse for us,” is how the KJV renders it.

Perhaps you saw Mel Gibson's movie, *The Passion of the Christ*, which portrayed so vividly the physical agony Jesus endured on the cross. But know this. Jesus endured something far more horrid than the nails that pierced His flesh. It was the curse He bore. He became *a curse* for us. To be cursed by men is bad, but to bear the curse of God is horror beyond comprehension.

What does this mean, to say that Jesus *became a curse for us*? Paul gives us a clue at the end of verse 13, quoting Deuteronomy 21:23, “For it is written: ‘Cursed is everyone who is hung on a tree.’” The cited text gives guidelines for what to do with the body of a criminal after his execution. The law said not “to leave his body on the tree overnight.” The reason? “Cursed is everyone who is hung [impaled, here crucified] on a tree.”

That's what happened to Jesus. He died a criminal's death and did it in such a way as to take the criminal's place.

But He went further. Paul says that Christ *became* a curse. How did He do that? On the cross the Christ took upon Himself the sins of His people, and in so doing He subjected Himself to the consequence of those sins. He experienced the wrath of God. He felt the fury of divine punishment. He suffered spiritual alienation. He drank the cup of God's judgment. He faced the fire of hell. In short, He became what we are in order to experience what we deserve. This was the price He paid. He endured our *curse*.

But there's something else involved in this redemption price, something very specific.

3. *He shed His blood* (Eph 1:7; Acts 20:28; 1 Pet 1:18-19; Rev 1:5). Listen to what the Scriptures say about His blood:

⁵ “*The Boy Who Lost His Boat*,” Good News Publishers, Westchester, IL.

⁶ In the Middle Ages there was a widespread heresy that asserted that God actually paid a ransom to the devil to free His people. But God didn't owe the devil a penny. No, God made this payment to satisfy His own righteous demands as revealed in His law.

-Ephesians 1:7 “In him we have *redemption through his blood*, the forgiveness of sins, in accordance with the riches of God’s grace.”

-Acts 20:28 “Be shepherds of the church of God, which he *bought with his own blood*.”

-1 Peter 1:18-19 “For you know that it was not with perishable things such as silver or gold that you were redeemed from the empty way of life handed down to you from your forefathers, *but with the precious blood of Christ*, a lamb without blemish or defect.”

There’s the price of redemption, beloved. In order to cancel our curse and secure our freedom, this was the price He paid. He shed *His blood*. Against His will? No. Freely, as an expression of His perfect love for us. John tells us in Revelation 1:5, “To him *who loves us* and has freed us from our sins *by his blood*.”

Oh, my friend, do you feel the wonder of God’s love for you? The Father loved you and gave His Son for you. The Son loved you and shed His blood in your place. The Spirit loves you and is wooing your heart even now.

Let me share another story to help us appreciate the wonder of redeeming love. When A.J. Gordon was pastor of a church in Boston, he met a young boy in front of the sanctuary carrying a rusty cage in which several birds fluttered nervously. Gordon inquired, "Son, where did you get those birds?" The boy replied, "I trapped them out in the field." "What are you going to do with them?" "I'm going to play with them, and then I guess I'll just feed them to an old cat we have at home." When Gordon offered to buy them, the lad exclaimed, "Mister, you don't want them, they're just little old wild birds and can't sing very well." Gordon replied, "I'll give you \$2 for the cage and the birds." "Okay, it's a deal, but you're making a bad bargain." The exchange was made and the boy went away whistling, happy with his shiny coins. Gordon walked around to the back of the church property, opened the door of the small wire coop, and let the struggling creatures soar into the blue.

The next Sunday he took the empty cage into the pulpit and used it to illustrate his sermon about Christ's coming to seek and to save the lost -- paying for them with His own precious blood. "That boy told me the birds were not songsters," said Gordon, "but when I released them and they winged their way heavenward, it seemed to me they were singing, 'Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!'"

You and I have been held captive to sin, but Christ has purchased our pardon and set us at liberty. When a person has this life-changing experience, he will want to sing, "Redeemed, redeemed, redeemed!"⁷

That brings us to the fourth discovery. Not only a people, a payment, and a price...

D. Redemption involves a purpose. Verse 14 explains, “He redeemed us *in order that* [here’s a purpose statement] the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus.” Here’s the purpose. We who were once under God’s *curse* are now entitled to experience God’s *blessing*!

What does this life of blessing look like? Christ didn’t pay the ransom price so we could do our own thing—that’s what got us in trouble in the first place. No, if we have been redeemed, two things follow.

⁷ Story told by Paul Lee Tan, in *Daily Bread*

1. *We belong to the One who paid the price (1 Cor 6:19-20).* “You are not your own,” Paul states in 1 Corinthians 6:19-20. Why not? “You were bought at a price [i.e. redeemed]. Therefore [here’s the result of redemption] honor God with your body.”

If you are a Christian you are under new ownership. The One who took your sin now takes the controls of your life. To put it more specifically, if we’ve been redeemed...

2. *We’ve been set free to serve Him (Gal 5:1, 13; Rev 5:9).* Galatians 5:1 says, “It is for freedom that Christ has set us free...” Redeemed people are free people. They’re free to do something they couldn’t do while under the curse of the law. They’re free to serve God. Galatians 5:13 tells us, “You, my brothers, were *called to be free*. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, *serve one another* in love.”

There’s the purpose of our redemption. It’s a God-focused purpose. It’s no wonder that the theme of the heavenly song in Revelation 5:9 reflects this purpose, “You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and *with your blood you purchased men for God*.” How did He purchase us? *With His blood*. Why did He purchase us? *For God*.

There’s what sets Christ’s death apart from any other death. Yes, 1.2 million soldiers have died so that we now enjoy many wonderful privileges in this life, but Christ died to give us the eternal privilege of living with and for our Maker in paradise. It’s good to remember the ones who died for us. It’s essential to remember the One who died for us.

We owed a debt. He paid our debt. That’s *redemption*. “Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us.”

You ask, “What difference should this make in my life?” Let’s hear Spurgeon again: “Sinners—you must either be cursed of God, or else you must accept Christ, as bearing the curse instead of you. I do beseech you, as you love your souls, if you have any sanity left, accept this blessed and divinely-appointed way of salvation. This is the truth which the apostles preached, and suffered and died to maintain; it is this for which the Reformers struggled; it is this for which the martyrs burned at Smithfield; it is the grand basis doctrine of the Reformation, and the very truth of God.

“Down with your crosses and rituals, down with your pretensions to good works, and your crouchings at the feet of priests to ask absolution from them! Away with your accursed and idolatrous dependence upon yourself; Christ has finished salvation-work, altogether finished it. Hold not up your rags in competition with His fair white linen; Christ has born the curse; bring not your pitiful penances, and your tears all full of filth to mingle with the precious fountain flowing with His blood. Lay down what is your own, and come and take what is Christ’s. Put away now everything that you have thought of being or doing, by way of winning acceptance with God; humble yourselves, and take Jesus Christ to be the Alpha and Omega, the first and last, the beginning and end of your salvation.”⁸

Make It Personal: There are only two options...

1. *You can accept the One who became a curse.* If you do, God will accept you and make you His forever child. But if you refuse His Son, then option two is yours.

2. *You can experience God’s curse yourself.* There is no other option.⁹

⁸ Charles Spurgeon, pp. 66-7.

⁹ “May the words of my mouth and the meditation of my heart be pleasing in your sight, O LORD, my Rock and my Redeemer.” Psalm 19:14