**June 23, 2019 Galatians 3:23-29**

***Who’s Your Nanny?***

**Scripture:** Galatians 3:23-29 NRSV (23)Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. (24)Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. (25)But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, (26)for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. (27)As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (28)There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (29)And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise.

**Notes:**

1. The law acted as their custodian, a tutor, or a ***nanny***.
   1. The law was put in place to ***watch*** ***over*** Israel.
   2. The law provided ***direction*** and ***restraint***.
   3. The law did ***little*** to help the Israelites.
2. ***Faith*** is the mark of maturity which the law expects.
   1. Israel did not ***humble*** themselves.
   2. If you don't trust God the law will feel ***burdensome***.
   3. What the ***law*** is for you depends on what you are toward the ***Law***-***giver***.
   4. the gospel is accompanied by the ***Holy*** ***Spirit***.
3. Faith in Christ ***unites*** us to him
   1. all the ***benefits*** he can give become ours.
   2. If you entrust yourself to Christ, he will not ***refuse*** you.
   3. our ***status*** does not make us more or less a child
4. we are no longer under the ***law***.
   1. But that is no longer our ***relation*** to the law.
   2. the ladder of the law has fallen and become a railroad track of ***joyful*** ***obedience***.
5. The Spirit transforms us as we ***trust*** the promises of God,
   1. we ***love*** what God loves
   2. ***Faith*** has come through the redemptive work of Jesus.
   3. The law is no longer a ***burden*** placed upon God’s people.

**Transcript:**

In the mid to late 1960’s there was a TV show I watched on a regular basis. It’s name was *Family Affair*. It was the story of Engineer Bill Davis and his orphaned nieces and nephew, Cissy, Buffy, and Jody, who came to live with Bill and his butler Mr. French.

Mr. French was originally identified as a *Bill’s Gentleman's Gentleman.* In other words Mr. French was the Butler. He would take care of Bill Davis’ household; preparing meals, cleaning, taking care of the laundry, and other miscellaneous chores. But when the twins come to live with them, things in the household change very rapidly and very much. Uncle Bill quickly learns the role of being a father; and Mr. French quickly learns the role of being a nanny. Much of the show centers on the interaction between Buffy, Jody, Cissy, and Mr. French who had never bargained for such a position. The show lasted for several years and showed how Mr. French would oversee, and control the lives of the children.

We all grew up under the control of someone who established and upheld the rules. For many of us it was our parents; some may have lived with grandparents or another relative; and still others may have lived with somebody else. No matter where you were raised there were always rules to follow, and somebody who would reign over you to make sure you followed those rules.

Today as we look into Galatians 3 Paul explains that the law is a custodian of sorts, or a nanny in other words. He also talks about the link between the Law, Faith, and our relationship to Christ. Read with me as we share in our sermon passage from Galatians 3:23-29 .

*(23)Now before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. (24)Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith. (25)But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, (26)for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith. (27)As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. (28)There is no longer Jew or Greek, there is no longer slave or free, there is no longer male and female; for all of you are one in Christ Jesus. (29)And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise. (Galatians 3:23-29 NRSV)*

As we read this section of Galatians Paul explains the connection between the Law, Faith and our relationship to Jesus Christ. *“…Before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed. Therefore the law was our disciplinarian until Christ came, so that we might be justified by faith.”* (Galatians 3:23-24 NRSV) Before faith came, Israel was confined under the law. The law acted as their custodian, a tutor, or a nanny. It controlled what they were allowed to do and when they should do it.

The word custodian refers to a servant in a family who watch over a child until the child reached the maturity to do what is right without external influence. But while the custodian was able to control the child’s actions, the custodian was not able to make the heart of the child good. Much like Mr. French, the law was put in place to watch over the children of Israel. But while the law watched over and gave direction to them, the law could not give them their inheritance. Only the father is able to give the inheritance to the child.

The law provided direction and restraint to the children of Israel. But it could not give Israel a new heart, and it could not give to Israel its inheritance. The law did little to help the Israelites because they did not meet with faith. Hebrews 4:2 states, “…*but the message they heard did not benefit them, because they were not united by faith with those who listened*. (Hebrews 4:2 NRSV)” The Israelites did not know Jesus personally and when they saw the law, they saw a lot of overbearing rules that were difficult to obey.

Faith is the mark of maturity which the law expects, and so the law kept Israel under restraint until faith came. The law instructed the youthful Israel how to live a life of faith in the merciful promises of God; but the response was by and large adolescent rebellion. Israel, for the most part, did not humble themselves, and so the law functioned to expose Israel's sin, and hold them under restraint until the day when God began to take away the blindness and give them a heart to trust him.

The law works that way today, as well. If you don't have a heart to trust God and rely on His mercy, the law will feel like a burdensome, offensive, deadening job description given by a harsh schoolmaster. But if you do have a heart to trust God and rely on his mercy, then the law will feel like a much-needed and desired prescription from a wise and beloved Physician. What the law is for you depends on what you are toward the Law-giver. “*For the love of God is this, that we obey his commandments. And his commandments are not burdensome,” (1 John 5:3 NRSV)* But for Israel the law was a burdensome job description for earning their blessing, why you may ask; because they did not meet with faith.

Paul tells us, “*But now that faith has come, we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian*” What does he mean: "Faith has come"? I don't think he can mean that no one in Israel had saving faith before Christ came. Abraham had that saving faith. In Psalm 32 we find David whom is righteous by faith. Hebrews 11 lists men who followed God and we know them as the *believers'* hall of fame. Paul does not mean that no one had faith before Christ came, or that justification was by works before Christ came. There were believers who were justified by faith all along, 7,000, Paul says, in the time of Elijah. When Paul says that "faith has come," it means that by God's grace a period in redemptive history has come in which great numbers of people, especially Gentiles, are responding to God's Word in faith. "Faith has come" means that a great movement has begun whose members are marked by this above all else; they *trust* like little children in the mercy of God.

When the law was preached, it met with very little faith. But when the gospel is preached, many believe and are saved. The reason why the law mostly shut people up in sin, while the gospel wins faith from large numbers is that the preaching of the gospel is accompanied by a powerful work of the Holy Spirit to open the hearts of the listeners. "Faith has come" means that God is fulfilling the promise to give us new hearts. If God were not causing the gospel of Christ to come with the work of the Spirit, the gospel would bind us in sin just like the law did. But that was not God's plan, and every one of us here who lives by faith in the Son of God is living evidence that by the sovereign, effectual grace of the Holy Spirit "faith has come"—even to us, and taken up residence in our hearts, and made us new. If you know the hardness of your own heart apart from renewing grace, you thank God every day that you are a believer.

Faith in Christ unites us to him, all the benefits he can give become ours. If you entrust yourself to Christ, and say you want to be his eternal guest, and wear his garments, and accept his customs, he will not refuse you. You have so honored his value and trustworthiness, that he would be denying himself to turn you away. And so all he has is yours. In verse 24 we read of justification that is, acquittal of all guilt, forgiveness of all sin. And in verse 26 it talks of sonship. To belong to Christ is to be a child of God with all the privileges implied in that relationship. Another way to say the same thing is verse 29: "If you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise." To be a descendant of Abraham and to be a child of God are virtually the same. You become both when you entrust yourself to Christ and say, "I want to be your guest." And one of the most wonderful things in Christ's household; where guests become family members, is that our own racial, social, and sexual status does not make us any more or less than child and heir. Verse 28: "*There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is neither male nor female*."

Woe to the presumptuous guest who thinks that his Jewishness or free status or maleness has won his admission to the Lord's house, or merits a greater share of the inheritance. [Ephesians 2:19](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%202.19) says that Jews and Gentiles in Christ are "fellow citizens . . . and members of the household of God." [Ephesians 6:9](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph%206.9) says that masters and slaves have but one master in heaven, who shows no partiality. And [1 Peter 3:7](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20Pet%203.7) says that husbands and wives are joint-heirs of the grace of life in Christ.

When Christ admits us into his protection and care by faith alone every possible ground for boasting is removed, whether racial, social, or sexual. We are all utterly dependent on the honor of Christ, not the value of our distinctive, and nothing is more secure than the honor of Christ.

Finally, we are no longer under the law. We are no longer under the direction of the custodian. We are no longer directed by the supervisor. We are no longer under the watchful eye of the nanny. Being "under the custodian" or "under law" means being oppressed by God's demand when you have no power to fulfill it. You either rebel against it, or you try forever to keep it in your own strength. But that is no longer our relation to the law. We are not under it any more, desperately trying to climb it to heaven. For us the ladder of the law has fallen and has become a railroad track of joyful obedience. It is not on us any more as a deathly burden; we are on it.

"*If you are led by the Spirit, you are not under the law*." [Galatians 5:18](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%205.18)The Spirit so transforms our life as we trust the promises of God ([Galatians 3:5](https://biblia.com/bible/esv/Gal%203.5)), we love what God loves, we hate what God hates, and so his law is no longer a burden but a mountain railroad of joy.

If you are Christ’s, then you are the offspring of Abraham. If you are the offspring of Abraham, then you are an heir of all that was promised Abraham by God; you are adopted into the family of God, you are now a child of the king. Who is your Nanny today? Who controls what you will do and will not do? Who controls when you must complete certain tasks? The answer can be one of two different choices. Either you decide for yourself or the law decides for you.

Don’t get me wrong this morning. Even when you decide for yourself what you will do and when you will do it. If you have faith in God the Father, the Holy Spirit leads you and guides you, and you trust in the leading of the Holy Spirit, you follow Him to where he leads; not because you must, but because you trust him and love him. Who is your Nanny today?

Faith has come to each of us through the redemptive work of Jesus Christ. We are called to obey the teachings of the law, not out of obligation, but out of love and mutual respect. The law is no longer a burden placed upon God’s people. The law is the mature way of living a Christian life. Jesus said the greatest commandment is to Love the Lord with all of your heart, mind, and strength, and to love our neighbor as yourself. We are called to be God’s people and we are God’s people when we obey this one command. In fact, I have said this before and I will repeat this until the end of time. If we are able to keep this command, all the other commands found in the law, will be met as well.

As we close today, I challenge you; if you feel the commandments seem like a difficult chore to keep, seek the will of God for your life. Call on him to strengthen your faith, ask him to come into your life and change your heart, ask him to create in you a new being who desires to serve the Lord wholeheartedly. Hear the voice of the Lord today calling out to you, asking you to trust him, asking you to have the faith to move mountains, asking you to be obedient to the leading of the Holy Spirit.