

September 27th

Therefore the Law has become our tutor to lead us to Christ, that we may be justified by faith. -Galatians 3:24

Have you ever seen a marathon in which the runners were supposed to lose? Or how about a heavyweight bout in which the boxers' goal was to be knocked out? Such hypothetical events seem ridiculous to us because we know that the purpose of an athletic competition is to win. In fact, we believe that success is the goal in most everything we do. But when it comes to one of the most important facets of God's relationship to humanity, the Apostle Paul would disagree with our premise of success. In Galatians chapter 3, Paul attempts to explain the purpose of the Old Testament law in the context of God's unfolding plan of redemption. Such an explanation was crucial because the Christians in Galatia were beginning to look back to the Law for their salvation instead of to Christ alone. Paul explained that while God had called the Israelites to live by the Law, and thus be blessed (cf. Deuteronomy 30:15, 16), His ultimate goal was really to reveal to them their ultimate brokenness (Galatians 3:19, 22). No one was supposed to 'win' under the law; no one could 'win'. While not clear from its ancient outset, Paul revealed that God's ultimate design for the Law was that humanity would 'lose'. When men and women, through their failure to abide by the Law, came to believe in the reality of their absolute sinfulness, they would be driven to their absolute need for faith alone; for Christ alone. This does not mean that the Law failed or that the Law was not good. To the contrary, the law did exactly what it was supposed to do: reveal the righteousness of God and demonstrate that we can never measure up to that righteousness. Like the Galatians, our problem is that we fail to see life through the lenses of lowliness. We look to the things in our life and believe that our ultimate purpose is always to succeed. But when a man or woman recognizes their own weakness, they begin to see God's purposes in the details of their life. They see that marriage is not ultimately intended to bring us marital bliss, but to show us our selfishness, drive us back to God, and through this, reveal God's grace to the world. They see that a demanding job is not ultimately intended to help us "rise to the occasion", but to show us our neediness and drive us back to God. The ultimate goal of this existence is to show us our place in this universe, to point us back to the One who has run the race and won, who has triumphed in His bout with death, and who now stands waiting to exalt the lowly, those who could never win without His grace.

Father, grant us the eyes to see our place in this world and the hearts to live in humble dependence upon you.