

“Ford, Ferrari and Faith”

Galatians 3: 23-29

23 Before the coming of this faith, we were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. 24 So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. 25 Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian.

26 So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, 27 for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. 28 There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. 29 If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.

Just recently I watched a movie that I had heard good things about back in 2019. It was about the rivalry between Henry Ford and Enzo Ferrari. Their relationship helps us understand what the apostle Paul says in his teaching about law and faith. Moses (Law) keeps us safe; Jesus (Faith) leads us to maturity.

Every June, near the town of Le Mans, France, one of the most prestigious auto races in the world is run. Called “24 Hours of Le Mans,” it is one third of the Triple Crown of Motorsport, along with the Indianapolis 500 and the Monaco Grand Prix. “Gentlemen, start your engines.”

Le Mans is full of tradition: A French tri-color is waved to start the race, and then jets fly over, trailing blue, white and red smoke. Safety flags are waved during the final lap of the race, congratulating the drivers and other finishers. But safety itself has not always been a tradition — in 1955, one of the cars crashed into a crowd of spectators, killing more than 80 people.

In 1949, the Ferrari company claimed its first Le Mans victory. This Italian sports car company was founded by Enzo Ferrari 10 years earlier out of Alfa Romeo’s race division. Ferraris quickly became dominant, winning twice in the 1950s and then every Le Mans from 1960 through 1965 — six straight victories.

But in the early 1960s, an international drama developed, presented in a movie released in 2019. The Ford Motor Company tried to buy Ferrari, but the deal fell apart at the last minute when Enzo Ferrari walked away from the negotiating table.

Executive Henry Ford II was so furious that he assembled a team led by Carroll Shelby, who had helped to drive a British car to victory. Ford’s goal: To beat Ferrari at its own game by constructing a car that could win the 1966 Le Mans World Championship. Ford had a lot to prove, since people have long said that the name FORD means “Fix Or Repair Daily.” “Found On Road Dead.” “First On Rubbish Dump.” Not to mention the joker who said, “Speed kills. Drive a Ford and live forever!”

In a movie titled Ford v. Ferrari, Matt Damon plays Shelby, a true automotive visionary who went on to gain fame for his work on Ford’s Mustang. Christian Bale plays a British test driver named Ken Miles, who worked with Shelby on the quest for victory at Le Mans. And what was the car they built and entered? The Ford GT40. Did it

win? No spoilers here — you'll have to see the movie! (I'm not Pat Roush) Suffice it to say that Ferrari's days were numbered.

A similar transition was happening in the first century, when the apostle Paul wrote about law and faith in his letter to the Galatians. The link might not be immediately obvious, because there is a huge gap between the first century and today. The Law did what God wanted it to do. It served as a guide. If you lived within it, you had the best chance to live and full and meaningful life. But the Law had it's limits!

Here's an example of the limitations of the law, told by the late daytime television host Art Linkletter. How many of you have seen a live or recording of Art Linkletter's "Kids Say the Darndest Things"? He specialized in interviewing children:

Art: What are you learning at school that you can tell us about?

Child: They teach you not to fight with your friends.

Art: How do they do that?

Child: They read from the Bible, where Jesus says, "Thou shalt not kill."

Art: I'm happy to hear that they've stopped the killing on the playgrounds this way. But tell me, have you been punished lately?

Child: Yes.

Art: What for?

Child: Hitting a kid in the face with a cupcake.

Art: Why did you do that?

Child: It's not in the Bible. —Art Linkletter, *Kids Say the Darndest Things* (Nighthawk Books, 2015).

The law of the Bible had success, but only to a certain point. Like Ferraris at Le Mans, the law could only go so far. Paul says that "before faith came, we were imprisoned and guarded under the law until faith would be revealed" (v. 23). The "law was our disciplinarian," which in the original Greek of the New Testament is the word *paidagohgos* (v. 24). The word is translated not only as "disciplinarian" in the NRSV, but as "custodian" in the RSV, "guardian" in the NIV, "schoolmaster" in the KJV and "tutor" in the NKJV. In my favorite of recent, the New Living Translation agrees with the NIV.

And what is a *paidagohgos*? You might hear an echo of the English word "pedagogue," which means teacher. But this is not exactly right in the Greek. *paidagohgos* literally means "child-leader," and in the first century he was a slave who supervised and guarded children. The pedagogue didn't teach anything in a formal sense—not reading and writing nor any other subject. Most pedagogues didn't know how to read. Their job was to watch over the young boy, to guide him and to keep him out of trouble. His responsibility, according to biblical scholar Richard Hays, "was to walk them to and from school, to see that they behaved properly and stayed out of harm's way." The pedagogue was something like a male nanny or governess. He was a moral authority, a guide, a companion. He was not a member of the family, however, so once the children grew up, his services were no longer required. There came a time for the young man to spread his wings, venture out into the world and make is own mistakes. [NOTE 1]

Like Ferrari, the days of the child-leader were numbered. Once Christ came, we were released from the governess, the guardian, the pedagogue, the law. Not that the law was a bad thing. This child-leader had a very good run. Hays says that the law “had a certain necessary role in confining, guarding and disciplining God’s people during the interval between Moses and Christ.” Like Ferrari, it had a lot of success, right up to a certain point. “But now that faith has come,” writes Paul to the Galatians, “we are no longer subject to a disciplinarian, “for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (vv. 25-26). Paul knew there were some in the Galatian church who were preaching that the way to become a Christian was through a kind of super-obedience to the law of Moses and the teachings of Jesus. Paul had no patience for this. He says to the Galatians that the law is like that childhood servant, the pedagogue. Christians have to leave dependence on the law behind if they are to attain spiritual maturity.

So what exactly was it that replaced the law? Paul says that it was the “faith” (v. 23). Most English translations of the Bible simply say “faith,” but the Greek of the New Testament says “*the* faith.” Paul is telling us that the guarding of the law would happen *until the faith* would be revealed (v. 23). In similar manner, Ferrari would be dominant at Le Mans *until* the Ford GT40 would be revealed. **[NOTE 2]**

God was tinkering around in the divine workshop, like Carroll Shelby and Ken Miles at the Ford test facility. Something new was being developed, to break the mold and change the game. The innovation that God came up with was nothing less than the faith of Jesus Christ. Not our faith. Not human faith. But the faith of Jesus Christ. Like the Ford GT40, this was something that the world had never seen before.

Now some people are going to be surprised by this, because they read Galatians and assume that this talk of faith refers to their faith, to human faith. Yes, it is certainly important for us to have faith, and to trust in the saving power of God in Jesus Christ. But Paul is trying to make the point that the great innovation that saves us is *the faith of Jesus Christ*. We were being led around by the law “until Christ came” (v. 24). What justifies us, making us right with God forever, is “the faith” — the faith of Jesus Christ.

This is where the Ferrari and Ford comparison suddenly makes perfect sense. God’s people had been riding in a Ferrari for a long time, in a model called *paidagohgon*, “child-leader.” But when Christ came, they switched brands and jumped into the model called “faith.” The power of this new vehicle comes from Christ, the one who loved us and gave himself for us, according to Paul (2:20).

We show our faith by jumping into this car and riding in it. You have to believe that the first driver of the Ford GT40 also had a lot of faith, getting into a brand new model and flying around the dangerous streets of Le Mans. In the same way, we show our faith by trusting in the power of the faith of Jesus — faith which was seen so clearly when he died on the cross for each and every one of us. **[NOTE 3]**

As a result, Paul says that we are “in Christ Jesus” (v. 26). This is not to say that we climb into a vehicle called Jesus and ride around. But still, the idea that we are “in Christ Jesus” gives us a sense of riding in something new. Paul says that “in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (v. 26).

Once we are riding in Christ, the *first victory flag we see is the one that says that we are "all children of God,"* members of God's family. This meant a lot to the Galatians, because they knew that this term had once been reserved only for the Jewish people, those who had followed God's law. Now it is extended to everyone who is "in Christ Jesus." [NOTE 4]

Baptism is another victory flag. "As many of you as were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ," says Paul (v. 27). Baptism is the sacrament that moves us from one life to another, from non-Christian to Christian living. When we were baptized, we got into something new — Paul says we "clothed ourselves with Christ." Once again, we hear the idea of getting into something. Although there were no autos in the first century, Paul might say today that we "got into the Christ car." Baptism gives us a whole new way to move into the future.

Finally, our life in Christ means that 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. And if you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to the promise" (vv. 28-29). The *final victory flag is the signal that we are all one in Christ Jesus.* People of all social classes are made one by Christ. Gender roles lose their significance when people are made one in Christ. And finally, people who belong to Christ are part of the family of Abraham, heirs of all of God's goodness.

Ford, Ferrari and Faith. Just as the racing world changed when Ford and Ferrari battled on the streets of Le Mans, the religious world changed when the faith of Christ entered the world. So what? How does this affect you? It means that you must rely on your faith in Christ and receive Jesus as Lord and Savior. It means you need to seek to live HIS way. Did Jesus instruct the disciples to invite people to come to the Synagogue? No they invited people to meet Jesus. Invite people to meet Jesus. Invite people to sit down with you and read a chapter of the Bible and talk about it. Help people to become followers of Jesus. You know what you call a follow of Jesus? A disciple! Help people to become followers of Jesus!

I like this quote from Henry Ford: You can't build a reputation on what you are going to do. —Henry Ford. Do something. Find a way to live Jesus' way. Let's get the reputation as a church, people who love one another and care about their community!

Jesus is God's greatest innovation, sent to earth to provide a new way for people to be made right with God. We show our faith in him when we open the door, get in ... and go! Get in the new car called disciple. So what are you going to do about it? Just say good sermon Pastor Rick and leave it. I believe God is speaking through the Holy Spirit to your hearts this morning. You need to decide to follow Jesus as Lord and Savior and if you do that you are going to want to start doing what Jesus did. He commanded us to go out into the world and make Jesus followers of them. Please write something down on those lines there in your bulletin. What is your "I will ..." statement? I will _____.

Let's pray ... AMEN Source: *Henry G. Brinton, Greg Garis, Drexel N. Mitchell Sr., Melanie Silva and Carl Wilton contributed to this material.*

Sermon Notes for “Ford, Ferrari and Faith” given at Doster Church
Based on Galatians 3: 23-29 on May 3, 2026

- I. The Law was sufficient and had success. It worked UNTIL the faith of Jesus Christ was revealed. “The Faith” sets us free. Before Jesus the “Law” was our guardian, the disciplinarian or custodian. When Christ came we were released from the guardian, disciplinarian, or custodian.
- II. “for in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith” (vv 25-26). The faith of Jesus Christ was something that the world had never seen before. The faith of Christ comes from the One who loved us and gave Himself for us (verse 20).
- III. We show our faith by trusting in the power of the faith of Jesus which was seen clearly when He died on the cross for each and every one of us. As a result we are “In Christ Jesus, all children of God.” That is the first victory flag. We are members of God’s family!
- IV. Another victory flag is baptism. Baptism is the sacrament that moves us from one life to another, we clothe ourselves with Christ. Our new life in Christ means we are no longer strangers but One in Christ. We are one in Christ Jesus! What are you going to do about it? “I will ...” statement: (two lines for people to write down something please)