

The Book of Galatians
Lesson 5 - Galatians 3:1-14
Gospel Living
“Living by Faith”

Paul began with the Galatians’ own personal experience with Christ, for this is one of the best evidences of how God works. Paul had preached Christ crucified, not obedience to the Law; this message they believed, and it changed their lives. They had received the Spirit (the evidence of salvation) by the hearing of faith, and by believing the Word of God, not by obeying some law. The Gospel Paul preached, the Gospel that changed his life and their lives, was the true message. For them to go back to the Law after all the Spirit had done for them was to act like fools!

They had willingly suffered for their faith. Through the gifts of the Spirit, the ministers in the Galatians church were doing wonderful works, works that could never be done through the Law. Everything in their personal experience pointed to one fact: salvation is by grace, not by law.

Christians today need the truth of vs. 3, for many feel that the same Spirit who saved them is not able to keep them or help them live for Christ. They have the idea that salvation is by grace through faith, but that living the Christian life depends on their own strength. Romans chapter 7 teaches clearly that believers cannot do anything of themselves to please God; Romans chapter 8 teaches that the Spirit continues the work of grace and fulfills the demands of the law within us.

God promised to bless the heathen (Gentiles) through Abraham, which means that Jews and Gentiles are saved the very same way. The “gospel” that Abraham believed was not the full Gospel of the grace of God that we preach today; even the apostles did not fully understand the meaning of Christ’s death until it was explained to them. The gospel Abraham believed was the good news that God would bless Abraham and make him a mighty nation. Abraham believed this promise and this faith was accounted for righteousness.

The law puts us under a curse, but Christ died to remove that curse. He died on the cross and fulfilled the word given in Deuteronomy. Because He has taken our curse upon Himself, we are free to live in Christ. The blessing God promised Abraham is now available to the Gentiles by faith.

Read Galatians 3:1-5 and answer the following questions

1. Pastor Paul begins this chapter with “*You foolish Galatians, who has cast an evil spell on you*” NLT. How would you react if Pastor Jon Courson or Pastor Rob penned the beginning of a letter to you like that?

2. Why is it “foolish” and “bewitched” to choose human effort over the Spirit? Find all the reasons you can in 3:1-5.

3. In verse 3, Paul again calls his readers foolish and reminds them that although they have received the Spirit, they are still trying to please God by observing the law. Can you think of any ways that you could try to please God by doing something other than focusing on Him and your relationship with Him?

4. How can we tell the difference between religious driven things that we do and those that are faith driven?

Read Galatians 3:6-9 and answer the following questions

5. According to Genesis 15:6 and Galatians 3:6 on what basis did God proclaim Abraham as righteous before Him?

6. What does Paul say about Abraham in verses 6-9? Why do you think he chose him as an example? (Genesis 15:6, 18:18, 22:18; Habakkuk 2:4; Hebrews 10:38)

7. The Jews claimed to be the children of Abraham, that is the heirs of God's promises to him. According to verses 6-7 who are the true children of Abraham?

8. Think about the kind of faith Abraham had to have to believe God would give him a son at a ripe old age. What does this tell you about the kind of faith in Christ that a person needs to have?

Read Galatians 3:10-14 and answer the following questions

9. In verses 10-12, Paul quotes three Old Testament verses (Deuteronomy 27:26; Habakkuk 2:4; Leviticus 18:5). What do these Old Testament verses tell us about the law?

10. What do you think 3:10-12 is saying you would experience if you tried to win God's blessing by rules and self-effort?

11. What happened to the curse that went along with violation of the Law? (3:13-14)

12. Trying to be right with God by our own effort doesn't work. Good intentions such as "I'll do better next time" or "I'll never do that again" usually end in failure. How can we break the cycle of failure?

A Strong Rebuke **The Word in Life Study Bible**

The book of Ecclesiastes speaks of "a time to love and a time to hate, a time of war and a time of peace." When it came to a question of altering the Gospel about Jesus, Paul realized that it was no time for peace, but for intense conflict. Here in Galatians and elsewhere, he issued a strong rebuke both to those who would pervert the message of Christ in order to preserve their traditions, and to those who followed them.

Believers in Christ are called to be kind, humble, meek, longsuffering and to bear with one another, to forgive each another, and above all to love one another as they seek the unity of the body. At the same time, they are called to stand fast in the faith and in their liberty in Christ, and to contend earnestly in the faith. At times, that may mean anger and conflict when the very truth of the Gospel is under attack.

The energy with which Paul defended the fundamentals of the faith should encourage us as believers today to ask: What challenges to the faith do we need to meet? Where are compromises being made to basic biblical principles? Is our commitment to the faith strong enough that we are willing to defend it against those who would pervert it to their own ends?