

The Foolish Galatians

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[0 : 00] Chapter and verse divisions were added to Galatians well after Paul wrote the letter, but a clear break exists between what we know as Galatians chapter 2 and Galatians chapter 3. We will see a similar change of focus at the end of chapter 4 and the beginning of chapter 5. For the first two chapters in Galatians, we've seen Paul defend himself and his teaching from the false accusations of the Judaizers. Those Judaizers were people who claimed to be Christian, but who were teaching that to be saved, Christians still needed to follow the laws of Judaism. We've seen how they attacked Paul for his teaching justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone. By the end of chapter 2, which we finished last week, Paul had dismantled the Judaizers' arguments and had successfully defended his teaching. In chapters 3 and 4, the focus changes for Paul to remind his readers about proper doctrine. Then when we get to chapter 5, the focus will change again to show how proper doctrine applies to believers' lives. Chapter 3 has four distinct sections, verses 1 through 5, which we will cover tonight express Paul's frustration over how easily the Galatians were duped by the false teachers.

Then from verses 6 through 25, Paul uses three different covenants found in the Bible to illustrate how biblical doctrine demonstrates God's plan. If you're looking at Galatians 3 now, you'll see that the chapter has more than 25 verses. But Galatians chapter 3, verses 26 through 29, go with the first seven verses of chapter 4. So we'll cover the end of chapter 3 when we get to chapter 4. Each of the four main sections in Galatians 3 will have its own main idea, but the chapter's four sections do have a unifying theme. That unifying theme is that God's covenant with Moses complements his covenant with Abraham, and both covenants find their fulfillment in Christ and the salvation that Christ provides to people who put their faith in him. So that gives you a general idea of what we'll see in the next four studies, including tonight's. So with that in mind, let's read Galatians 3, 1 through 5. Paul said,

O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now perfected by the flesh?

Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you? Do so by the works of the law or by hearing with faith?

We spent last week talking quite a bit about justification and sanctification. Justification is the process by which God declares a believer to be righteous based upon faith alone in the saving work of God's Son, Jesus Christ. Sanctification happens after justification, and sanctification is the process following salvation where the believer continues to become more and more like Christ. Even though this is a new section of the letter, justification and sanctification are prominent in tonight's text too. As blunt as the ESV's translation of Galatians 3, 1 through 5 is, the English softens the meaning of what Paul said in the original text. The main idea in the section headings for tonight's lesson will highlight some of Paul's bluntness. And here is that main idea. After being saved by grace alone through faith alone, believers who act as if they must be justified by works have lost their minds. So after being saved by grace alone through faith alone, believers who act as if they must be justified by works have lost their minds. We're going to break tonight's text into only two sections. And the first covers just verse 1. And in that verse, we see the Galatians idiocy. So the Galatians idiocy is the first thing that you'll see.

[4 : 45] Might be the first time we have ever used idiocy as a heading for the lesson text, but you'll see that it fits here. Perhaps it might be the last time we use it as a heading too, but we'll find out later on.

Look at verse 1 again. He said, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.

Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines the word idiocy as something notably stupid or foolish. And as we go through the verse, we'll see how the section heading accurately portrays what Paul wrote to the Galatians.

J.B. Phillips' New Testament paraphrase may come the closest to Paul's original meaning here.

The Phillips' New Testament paraphrases the beginning of verse 1 as, O you dear idiots of Galatia. Can you imagine a preacher today starting a letter or a sermon with, O you dear idiots? So the tone of the whole verse and of the whole section is one of unbelief.

[6 : 00] It's unthinkable to Paul that the Galatians have changed so quickly. The only explanation possible is that they've gone out of their minds. And that's why the main idea says that believers who rely on works to maintain their justification have lost their minds.

Paul's not saying here that the Galatians were naturally stupid. He's saying that they failed to use their powers of perception. They didn't use their mental power as they should.

They acted thoughtlessly. The Greek word translated foolish means mindless. And so it refers to their lack of spiritual perception. Similarly, John MacArthur wrote, The Greek word translated foolish does not connote mental deficiency, but mental laziness and carelessness.

The believers in Galatia were not stupid. They simply failed to use their spiritual intelligence when faced by the unscriptural, gospel-destroying teaching of the Judaizers.

So they were not using their heads. For those of you who were here for our study in the Sermon on the Mount, we need to take a slight detour to answer a question that may have occurred to you.

[7 : 13] In Matthew 5.22, Jesus said, But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother will be liable to judgment. Whoever insults his brother will be liable to the council.

And whoever says, You fool, will be liable to the hell of fire. So that might raise the question, By referring to the Galatians as foolish, does Paul violate what Jesus taught in the Sermon on the Mount?

So here's what Jesus was saying in Matthew 5.22. He was condemning speaking with contempt out of wrath and self-seeking anger. Throughout the Bible, God classifies certain people as fools.

And Paul's building on the theme of the fool that's found in the book of Proverbs. The fool or the naive person or the simple one are the types of people whose thoughts and patterns of life are not shaped by Scripture.

So the foolish are those who think and act like the world. Paul is telling the Galatians here that they are acting foolishly and not with biblical sense. So when he says, You succumb to the doctrine of the Judaizers, he's telling them that they are acting spiritually foolish and they're forsaking the revealed way of God for the world.

[8 : 31] As we consider what got Paul so agitated, we need to go back to what we studied several weeks ago when we looked at Galatians 1, verses 6 through 9. So here are Galatians 1, 6 through 9.

Paul said, I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel. Not that there is another one, but there are some who trouble you and want to distort the gospel of Christ.

But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach to you a gospel contrary to the one we preach to you, let him be accursed. As we have said before, so now I say again, if anyone is preaching to you a gospel contrary to the one you received, let him be accursed.

Paul is upset that the Galatians are quickly deserting God and turning to a different gospel. That's because the different gospel really is no gospel at all.

The only true gospel is the gospel of Christ. Anything else is false teaching. The Galatians' deviation toward false teaching is why Paul legitimately could call them foolish.

[9 : 45] Look at what Paul says after he calls them foolish. He says, Who has bewitched you? The word translated bewitched there is from a Greek word which means to charm or fascinate in a misleading way as by flattery, false promises, or occultic power.

It suggests the use of feeling over fact, emotion over clear understanding of the truth. Bewitched can carry the idea of sorcery, but that's not the idea here.

The Galatians weren't victims of a magical spell or incantation. They were misled pupils of teachings that they should have instantly recognized as false. They were willing victims, actually,

who succumbed to the flesh-pleasing works righteousness of the Judaizers.

The structure of Paul's question in the original text confirms that Paul already knew the answer to the question of who had bewitched the Galatians. That's because the word translated who is singular in the Greek.

We know that the Galatians were being bothered by false teachers, plural. However, Paul is referencing the source of their false teaching rather than just the false teachers themselves.

[11 : 03] So here's a question for you. Who's the source of any false teaching when we get to the root of it? You're correct. Satan is the root of any false teaching.

And underlying Paul's question is the role of Satan. All temptation is a bewitching because, in temptation, Satan promises results that cause us to set aside the truth of Scripture with respect to doctrine and practice.

The false teachers in Galatia, like any false teachers then and now, were promoting lies.

Remember the words of Jesus in John 8, 44.

Jesus told his detractors, You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him.

When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. John Stott sounded much like Paul when he wrote in his commentary, Much of our Christian stupidity in grasping and applying the gospel may be due to the spell which the devil cast.

[12 : 21] We need to understand Satan's strategies. He normally doesn't come directly to tempt us with some grievous sin or error. That would be too obvious.

Instead, he will seek to bewitch us or to entice us. Every day, professing Christians are bewitched by the song of Satan, sometimes through suggestions of popularity, or at other times by suggestions of immoral relationships.

None of us is exempt because this is how temptation works. Whatever the sin, Satan is out to trick us. When we feel the beguiling power of temptation, we should remember the words of the Apostle Paul here, when he said, O foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you?

All temptation is a bewitchment which can bring us into spiritual folly, and that is what Paul is indicting the Galatians for. At the end of verse 1, Paul reminded the Galatians that they knew better. He said there, at the end of verse 1, It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. Publicly portrayed translates a word that was used of posting important official notices on a placard in the marketplace or another public location for citizens to read.

[13 : 45] Jesus Christ had figuratively been placarded before the Galatians by Paul himself for everyone to seek clearly. We can surmise that Paul was a dynamic preacher, and perhaps he was dramatic as well.

Maybe those who heard him preach could almost hear the ringing of the hammer as it drove the nails into Jesus' hands and feet. He may have made them be able to visualize the blood flowing from Jesus' thorn-pierced brow and his wounded side.

They were convinced of Jesus' atoning death, convicted of their sin, and brought into grace through faith into the kingdom. So the Galatians' own experience of salvation should have prevented their falling for Judaizing falsehood.

They had experienced the powerful, transforming, mind-changing truth of the gospel of the crucified Christ. They saw clearly the meaning of the cross.

The gospel had come to them with full clarity and power of Christ's sacrifice on their behalf, and by faith they had believed it and received it. They also had the privilege of having the greatest preacher who probably ever lived aside from Jesus himself, yet they were still being bewitched.

[15 : 02] They had all been witnesses to each other's salvations, but somehow they still had been misled in the following other teachings. We know that Paul knew exactly what the Galatians had been taught because he was the one who taught them, and so that's why he had such a hard time believing that they had quickly turned away from the true gospel.

Jesus' crucifixion was central to the true gospel. John MacArthur wrote, Crucified translates a perfect passive participle, indicating that the crucifixion was a historical fact that had continuing results.

John declares, If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. Of course, that is 1 John 1.9.

A more literal translation of 1 John 1.9 is that he is still righteous to keep on forgiving our sins. No ritual, ceremony, regulation, or any other thing devised or accomplished by men can pick up where the cross leaves off because the cross never leaves off.

The cross is the continuing and eternal payment for sin, and every sinner who puts his trust in the cross is forever and continually being forgiven. A believer can no more stay saved by works than he could have been saved by works in the first place.

[16:29] So the cross keeps moving powerfully and relentlessly through history, and it will stand forever as living proof that men cannot redeem themselves. A couple of sentences in that quote are ones that we need to burn into our brains.

Those are, The cross is the continuing and eternal payment for all sin, and every sinner who puts his trust in the cross is forever and continually being forgiven.

The cross keeps moving powerfully and relentlessly through history, and it will stand forever as living proof that men cannot redeem themselves. John Stott had a similar comment.

He said, This, then, is the gospel. It is not a general instruction about the Jesus of history, but a specific proclamation of Jesus Christ as crucified.

The force of the perfect tense of the participle is that Christ's work was completed on the cross and that the benefits of his crucifixion are forever fresh, valid, and available.

[17:32] Sinners may be justified before God and by God not because of any works of their own, but because of the atoning work of Christ, not because of anything that they have done or could do, but because of what Christ did once when he died.

The gospel is not good advice to men, but good news about Christ, not an invitation to us to do anything, but a declaration of what God has done, not a demand, but an offer.

If the Galatians had grasped the gospel of Christ crucified, that on the cross Christ did everything necessary for salvation, they would have realized that the only thing required of them was to receive the good news by faith.

To add good works to the work of Christ was an offense to his finished work. We saw that at the end of verse 21 of chapter 2. That's where Paul wrote, If righteousness were through the law, then Christ died for no purpose.

Now that we've thoroughly explored the Galatians' idiocy, let's move to the second section of tonight's text. In verses 2 through 5, we see the Galatians' inconsistency.

[18:50] So inconsistency is your second blank. As we go through the verses, we'll see that the Galatians were inconsistent. What they were doing was different from what they supposedly believed.

Paul now exposes the senselessness of the Galatians even more. They should have resisted the spell of whoever was bewitching them. They knew perfectly well what the gospel was and that it was received by faith alone.

Their own experience had told them that. Look at verses 2 through 5 again. Paul said, Let me ask you only this.

Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Did you suffer so many things in vain if indeed it was in vain? Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

[19:53] We get an idea of just how worked up Paul is here. He's worked up because the Galatians are being misled and he says that he's going to ask only one question.

And then if you notice, he asks five questions when he gets rolling there. Before we look at the individual questions, we need to notice something common to all of them.

The wording of the questions indicates that despite being confused and misled, the Galatian believers are truly saved. Paul says that the believers have received the Spirit.

So that should be a warning to us that even true believers can be misled or bewitched, as Paul put it here. So let's take a look at the questions now.

And the first one comes in verse 2. That is where Paul says, Let me ask you only this. Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?

[20:52] Paul put this question in the context of preaching. Hearing with faith is literally hearing in faith. As they heard the gospel, they responded in faith and repentance.

The question here implies the answer that they received the Spirit when they believed, not by works of the law. The question and the answer are very important because the Spirit was at the forefront of all apostolic ministry and also at the forefront of the spread of the gospel.

As Paul speaks about the Spirit, he's talking both about the gift of the Spirit and the gifts of the Spirit. The Spirit was given to them when they responded in faith to the gospel.

Think about this as well. When the apostles taught, their teaching was accompanied by signs and wonders to demonstrate the authenticity of their teaching. Iconium was one of the cities in the province of Galatia when Paul and Barnabas taught there.

The beginning of Acts 14 tells us what happened when Paul and Barnabas visited Iconium. So here are Acts 14, verses 1-3.

[22 : 03] Acts 14, verses 1-3 say, Now at Iconium, they entered together into the Jewish synagogue and spoke in such a way that a great number of both Jews and Greeks believed.

But the unbelieving Jews stirred up the Gentiles and poisoned their minds against the brothers. So they remained for a long time speaking boldly for the Lord who bore witness to the word of His grace, granting signs and wonders to be done by their hands.

You can see there that Acts 14:3 says that God bore witness to His grace through signs and wonders. The Galatians had even more than Paul's and Barnabas' teachings.

They had tangible evidence from God that Paul and Barnabas were teaching the truth. We might be tempted today to think that we missed out by experiencing no signs and wonders when we heard the gospel preached to us.

And if we do that, we're thinking wrongly. When John Calvin was taunted that he did not have any miracles to confirm his teaching, he responded that he didn't need any.

[23 : 13] His message was from the Bible and had already been confirmed by the miracles recorded in the New Testament. In that sense, any teaching that expounds biblical truth is accompanied by signs and wonders, the same signs and wonders that the Galatians had.

Those signs and wonders would have been great testimony to see firsthand, but we can do even better than that. We can look to other places in Scripture to confirm what Paul had taught.

We're going to go to Ephesians 1, verses 11-14 for just a minute. And in Ephesians 1, verses 11-14, Paul wrote about how believers receive the Holy Spirit.

Ephesians 1, 11-14 say, In Him, talking about God, we have obtained an inheritance, having been predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of His glory.

In Him also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it to the praise of His glory.

[24 : 38] In Galatians 3, verse 2, Paul asks whether the believers receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith. You can see that Ephesians 1, 13 clearly answers that question.

So here is Ephesians 1, 13 again. In Him, you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in Him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit.

We already knew the answer to the question in Galatians 3, 2, and that answer is that the Galatians received the Spirit by hearing with faith.

The same is true for any Christian today. The Spirit was granted to the Galatians under Paul's preaching to demonstrate that the gospel had come to the Gentiles as well as to the Jews.

Think back to when Peter was preaching in Cornelius' house. The Spirit fell upon that Gentile household, and then later, in his defense of taking the gospel to these Gentiles, Peter informed the church leaders in Jerusalem that the Spirit came upon the Gentiles in the same way he came upon the early church in Jerusalem on the day of Pentecost.

[25 : 55] And that proof was sufficient enough grounds for Peter's baptizing of those Gentiles. Paul reminds the Galatians here that the Spirit sovereignly came upon them in order to manifest that they were hearing God's truth and that God indeed had made salvation available to the Gentiles.

They were baptized by the Spirit and with the Spirit as they believed the gospel. The gift of the Holy Spirit is the believer's most unmistakable evidence of God's favor, the greatest proof of salvation, and the guarantee of eternal glory.

Listen to what Paul said in Romans 8.16. Romans 8.16 says, The Spirit Himself bears witness with our spirit that we are children of God.

The Apostle John's teaching also aligns with Paul's. Here's 1 John 4.13. 1 John 4.13 says, By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit.

Listen to that one more time. 1 John 4.13, By this we know that we abide in Him and He in us because He has given us of His Spirit.

[27 : 21] So does John say there that believers have worked really hard to earn the presence of the Holy Spirit? No, he clearly says that Christ has given us of His Spirit.

John MacArthur wrote, It is therefore ludicrous to maintain, as some Christians do, that the full gift of the Holy Spirit comes through an additional work or experience. A person who does not have the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not need a second blessing.

He needs salvation. The indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit is inseparable from the new birth. At no time before salvation can a person have the indwelling Spirit and at no time after salvation can he not have Him.

I thought the interesting line in that one is a person who does not have the fullness of the Holy Spirit does not need a second blessing. He needs salvation. The Judaizers tried to claim justification by works, but justification by works is impossible.

People can never do enough to earn their salvation. Instead, any person's salvation, whether the person is a Jew or Gentile, is because of God's grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone.

[28 : 40] For proof of that, let's go back to Acts for a minute and listen to Peter's words to the Jerusalem council. We're going to look at Acts 15, verses 7 through 11.

So, Acts 15, 7 through 11. Those verses say this, After there had been much debate, Peter stood up and said to them, Brothers, you know that in the early days God made a choice among you, and that by my mouth the Gentiles should hear the word of the gospel and believe.

And God, who knows the heart, bore witness to them by giving them the Holy Spirit just as he did to us. And he made no distinction between us and them, having cleansed their hearts by faith.

Now, therefore, why are you putting God to the test by placing a yoke on the neck of the disciples that neither our fathers nor we have been able to bear? But we believe that we will be saved through the grace of the Lord Jesus just as they will.

The Holy Spirit is not the goal of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is the source of the Christian life. The Holy Spirit is not the product of faithful living.

[29 : 58] The Holy Spirit is the power behind that faithful living. A higher level of living does not bring the Holy Spirit submission to the Holy Spirit who already indwells the believer includes a higher level of living.

Going back to Galatians, let's move to verse 3 and look at Paul's next questions. We'll see that word translated foolish one more time.

Paul wrote, Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? We won't spend time on the verses first question.

The descriptions of foolish that we looked at for verse 1 also apply here. Another way to phrase verse 3's second question would be, How could you think that your weak, imperfect, still sinful flesh could improve upon what the divine Spirit of God began in you when you first believed?

Obviously, the answer is that nothing we could do could possibly improve upon what the Trinity already has done for us. Our flesh is still sinful. The Trinity is perfectly sinless.

[31 : 13] Sinful creatures could never improve upon a gift from the Godhead who is sinless. But the Galatians were acting like they could and that was a key inconsistency that they had.

Some of you may be thinking, what about the words of James in James 2, 14-17. So let's look at James 2, 14-17 for a minute.

James 2, 14-17 say, What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works?

Can that faith save him? If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food and one of you says to them, go in peace, be warmed and filled without giving them the things needed for the body, what good is that?

So also, faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead. At first blush, that passage in James 17 sounds like it conflicts with Paul's teaching that works are unnecessary for salvation.

[32 : 22] And you'll hear many people today still claim that James and Paul contradict each other. And the people who claim that James and Paul disagree are wrong. When James is talking about faith without works being dead, he's saying that for true believers, good works will be the evidence

of their salvation.

If someone is truly saved, good works naturally will follow. Rather than being the cause of salvation, those good works are the results of salvation.

salvation. Paul taught exactly the same thing. And we see that in the letter to the Ephesians. We're going to look at Ephesians 2, verses 8-10.

Here are what Ephesians 2, verses 8-10 say. By grace you have been saved through faith, and this is not your own doing. It is the gift of God, not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them. We often read Ephesians chapter 2, verses 8-9, but we sometimes forget to read Ephesians 2-10 along with them.

[33 : 42] And Ephesians 2-10 clearly shows that good works provide evidence of our salvation.

Listen to Ephesians 2-10 one more time. Paul said, For we are his workmanship created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them.

The validity of good works in God's sight depends on whose power they are done in and for whose glory. When good works are done in the power of God's Spirit and for God's glory, they are beautiful and acceptable to God.

When they are done in the power of the flesh for the sake of personal recognition or merit, those works are rejected by God. Legalism is separated from true obedience by attitude.

That last line is important to remember. Legalism is separated from true obedience by attitude.

Going back to Galatians chapter 3, the next question comes in verse 4.

Paul says, Did you suffer so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain? The use of the word suffer in most English versions is likely a poor translation there.

[34 : 59] Given the context, the Revised Standard Version and a few other translations have a more accurate translation of the Greek word. Listen to how the Revised Standard Version translates verse 4.

suffer. It says, Did you experience so much for nothing, if it really was for nothing? That Greek word translated by most English versions of suffer carries the basic idea of an experience, and sometimes the experience of pain or hardship.

But the context here suggests nothing of suffering or hardship, so it seems best to take the word here to refer to experience, and Paul is talking about the believer's personal experience with Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit, and with God the Father.

The believers knew that in their conversion experience they had received the Spirit by faith and not by works of the law. Their experience testified to them of the Spirit's work, and in their lives.

They had embraced the gospel experientially, and their consciences bore the witness to the reality of what Paul was preaching to them. If Paul is wrong, everything is pointless.

[36 : 15] All the joy and peace that the Galatians experienced in the gospel would be in vain, and they would lose it all if they tried to continue by fleshly methods. When we start talking about using experiences as proof of salvation, we need to be careful of going too far.

How do we know whether an experience is a genuine experience from the Holy Spirit? Well, the answer to that question is that we must test our experiences against Scripture.

If an experience coincides with Scripture, we can be confident that it's genuine. one. If an experience differs from Scripture, that experience is one we must reject.

It must have been last night's bad burrito that we had. No experience attested to by the Holy Spirit will contradict God's Word. That's why we need to be like the Bereans in Acts 17.11.

In Acts 17.11, listen to how Luke described the Bereans. He said, Now these Jews were more noble than those in Thessalonica.

[37 : 28] They received the word with all eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see if these things were so. We have one more verse to cover tonight, and that is Galatians 3.5, and that verse has the last question.

Paul wrote, Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and work miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith? When verse 5 talks about he who supplies the Spirit, the reference is to God himself.

We know that from Acts 1.4-5. Acts 1.4-5 say, And while staying with them, he, talking about Jesus, ordered them not to depart from Jerusalem, but to wait for the promise of the Father, which he said, You heard from me, for John baptized you with water, but you will be baptized with the Holy Spirit

not many days from now.

That word translated as supplies means to provide abundantly and with great generosity. It was used of patrons of the arts who underwrote productions of Greek plays, and it was also used of patriotic citizens who gave their wealth to help support their country's army or their government. It was also used of a groom's vow to love and care for his bride. So in God's superabundant generosity to his children, God provides them with the Spirit and works miracles among them.

[39 : 05] Miracles is a word which refers basically to inherent power or ability. Paul may have been referring to miraculous events that God had worked among the Galatian believers, or he may have been referring to the spiritual power over Satan, sin, the world, the flesh, and human weakness that the Father bestows on his children through the Holy Spirit.

So what's the answer to the question in Galatians 3.5? Does God bless believers because of their works or because of their faith? Well, by now, hopefully the answer is obvious.

The Galatians received the Spirit by faith. They continue in the Spirit by faith. Their experiences testified to these things, and all these things happened because they believed the gospel.

Think about Paul's argument here. His argument is powerful. If a person has received eternal salvation through trust in the crucified Christ, if that person has received the fullness of the Holy Spirit the same moment he believed, and if that person has the Father's Spirit endowed power working within him, how could that person hope to enhance, out of his own insignificant human resources, those experiences out of human effort?

So remember the main idea. After being saved by grace alone through faith alone, believers who act as if they must be justified by works have lost their minds.

[40 : 37] This is the real difference between the law and the gospel. The law says do this. The gospel says Christ has done it all. The law requires works of human achievement.

The gospel requires faith in Christ achievement. The law makes demands and bids us obey. The gospel brings promises and bids us believe.

So that's why the gospel is the good news. good works are the result of salvation rather than the cause of salvation.

And our study tonight should remind us of Romans chapter 5 verses 1 through 8. Listen to what Paul said to the Romans in chapter 5 verses 1 through 8.

He said, Therefore, since we have been justified by faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ. through Him we have also obtained access by faith into this grace in which we stand and we rejoice in the hope of the glory of God.

[41 : 46] Not only that, but we rejoice in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope.

And hope does not put us to shame because God's love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit who has been given to us. For while we were still weak, at the right time Christ died for the ungodly.

For one will scarcely die for a righteous person, though perhaps for a good person one would dare even to die. But God shows His love for us in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.

Let's pray. Father, we thank You for the reminders tonight that our salvation comes through Your grace alone, by faith alone, in Christ alone.

Help us to always remember that and help us to become even more grateful to You as we ponder those facts. Be with us as we continue to study deeper into Your Word.

[42 : 53] In Jesus' name we pray. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. Amen. you