

Galatians 3:1-14 (ESV) ¹O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. ²Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain - if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith - ⁶just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”? ⁷Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” ⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” ¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” ¹²But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree” - ¹⁴ so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.

I do not like it when in a new group setting the ice breaker is asking the question, “What is the most embarrassing moment in your life,” or “tell us one of your most foolish actions?” It reminds me of the man who always wore a wet shirt wherever he went. Finally, somebody asked him, “How come your shirt is always wet?” He answered by saying, “I read the directions, wash and wear.” We can all make foolish mistakes and embarrass ourselves. It is just the way it is. One night I needed to use a restroom in the worst of ways. I stopped at a brand-new rest stop and walked as fast as I could without running. I did not see the door for it was nothing but glass. My head hit the glass so hard that I thought I had busted my nose. I immediately looked around to see if anyone saw me make this foolish mistake. The next time I stopped there to get rid of some coffee, they had painted a red line across this glass door.

There are times in our lives when we are going in the wrong direction, always thinking we are right and then God steps in and gives us much needed correction. The Bible tells us that God disciplines those whom he loves. **1. God correcting and humbling us is proof of God’s**

love. Sometimes it is the wise blunt words of a friend that stops us in our tracks before we hit the window and do more foolish things. Yes, we can all play the role of a fool.

Out of a heart of love for the believers that Paul was writing to he gets really blunt and says, “O foolish Galatians.” “Who has bewitched you?” Or it could be asked, “Who has cast an evil spell on you?” The pure Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ was being sabotaged by false teachers called the Judaizers, also called the Circumcision Party. It would be like me saying from the pulpit, “In order to be a Christian all the men must be circumcised.” “Next Sunday we will have a service for all the uncircumcised men.” “It will be a cut up service.” “Yes, it is right for you to be circumcised if you want to have the gift of eternal life in heaven.” We can laugh at the foolishness of this but in Paul’s day this was no laughing matter. The entire Gospel of Jesus Christ was in jeopardy. Eternity was at stake. All the work that Jesus did for our salvation was in question by the false teachers. Jesus’ sacrifice on the cross, His resurrection, and ascension was not sufficient to save us unless the men were circumcised. Paul had convinced the people through his teaching and through his own personal suffering that putting all of one’s faith in Jesus is what saves them, not a person’s private part being cut into. They saw the crucifixion through the eyes and life of Paul. Paul himself bore scars all over his body from what he suffered.

This leads to a good question. **2. What is it about your life that displays the Gospel of Jesus Christ?** Are you able in a few words to speak the Gospel in an understandable way? Can you share your own personal testimony with sincerity and with confidence? God has gifted you and empowered you with the Holy Spirit in order to do so. “And you shall receive power and you will be my witnesses”, says Jesus. The stakes are quite high. **3. Every soul hungers for what only Jesus can give.**

Friends, please hear what I am about to say. **4. Faith is absolute assurance and certainty that God is who He says he is.** Hebrews 11:1 (NLT2) “¹Faith is the confidence that what we hope for will actually happen; it gives us assurance about things we cannot see.” Jesus took care of everything on the cross. In your last moments on this earth, it is your faith in Christ that puts you at ease. One’s faith in God means every day we have God’s help, power, and strength, to see us through the day with an inner strength straight from God. We cannot conjure up faith or belief or trust in God on our own with our own human strength or flesh. Faith is a gift from God. In your worst day ever, there is something inside of you that knows and feels God is going to see you through. It is called faith. **5. It is God who creates faith inside of you as you hear His word and believe it.** “Faith cometh by hearing, the hearing of the Word of God,” Paul tells us in Romans.

²Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? ³Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? ⁴Did you suffer so many things in vain - if indeed it was in vain? ⁵Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith - ⁶just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

Abraham was up in years. God came to Abraham and spoke to him. How Abraham heard the word of God I do not know. God spoke to Abraham. Abraham believed what God said to be true. Abraham believed. Abraham’s soul was saved for all eternity by putting the faith God created inside of him toward God. God told Abraham that through his family line the Messiah would be born, and all the nations would be blessed. The blood of Jesus that covers our sins covered the sins of Abraham. Jesus took upon himself the sins of Abraham on the cross and gave to Abraham His perfect righteousness. **6. Salvation is never by works. It is always by grace through faith.** **7. This is the completed work of Jesus, taking our sins**

and giving to us his righteousness. The blood of Jesus covers the Old Testament believers as it does ours.

⁷Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons and daughters of Abraham. ⁸And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.”

The Bible calls Abraham the father of the faith. The Bible calls us children of Abraham. When we get to heaven, please thank Abraham for accepting the Word of the Lord and not rejecting it. He is considered the father of all who believe.

⁹So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith. ¹⁰For all who rely on works of the law are under a curse; for it is written, “Cursed be everyone who does not abide by all things written in the Book of the Law, and do them.” Paul is stating the Gospel so the church in Galatia can be corrected where it is in error.

¹¹Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.” We do not come to an understanding of the Gospel in the same way. God is the one who saves us but our paths to understanding are often quite different. When Luther read, “the righteous shall live by faith,” he felt as if he left this earth and entered paradise and was reborn. The power of the Gospel saved him as he came to understand the true meaning of these words, “The righteous or the just, shall live by faith.” God always used the Word to birth faith inside of us but the verse that leads you to Christ may not be the verse that God uses to create faith in another person.

“¹² But the law is not of faith, rather “The one who does them shall live by them.” ¹³ Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us - for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who is hanged on a tree - ¹⁴so that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith.”

Jesus bore it all on the cross. He took care of everything. He was condemned so we can live freely for Him. I close with this thought. There are some people in this church who carry a heavy load of self-condemnation. You can see it in the sorrow in their eyes. They carry with them the feeling that they never measure up, that their past sins are too great for God to forgive. Their inner conflicts rule their emotions. My favorite words of Jesus are these. “It is finished.” Your sins and my sins are fully forgiven. Jesus was completely condemned by the Father for our sins. In Christ all of your sins are forgiven including the sin of carrying around a condemning attitude toward yourself. You have the perfect righteousness of Jesus in your soul. “There is no commendation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” Please quit condemning yourself. You will even sleep better at night and be more at peace during the day. Amen and Amen.