

How could they so quickly lose the image of Christ on the cross? The Galatians had been deceived into trusting in circumcision rather than the cross. They have been deceived into trusting in performance when they should only be trusting in Christ and His perfect performance for our salvation

“Must be living right.” Have you ever heard of this phrase or something similar? Or it must be nice.

It usually involves a situation where something positive happens and the thought is that someone lived a good life and did the right things and either God or fate rewarded good behavior.

Although we want to live right, we also must understand that sometimes wrong things happen to those who do the right thing and those who do wrong have good things happen to them.

Galatians 3:1-14 ESV

By Faith, or by Works of the Law?

3 O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified. 2 Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith? 3 Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by[a] the flesh? 4 Did you suffer[b] so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? 5 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— 6 just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?

7 Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.  
8 And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify[c] the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” 9 So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

### The Righteous Shall Live by Faith

10 For 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.” 11 Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for “The righteous shall live by faith.”[d] 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”— 14 so that in Christ

Paul is still upset that the Galatians were trusting in their work of obeying the law to earn their salvation instead of trusting in the work of Christ on the cross.

So Paul asks them a rhetorical question.

He asks them how they received the Holy Spirit in the first place.

By what they have done or by what Jesus has done.

If we aren’t careful, we can be tempted to earn our own salvation.

We can go through the motions of life and put so much of it on our shoulders instead of letting go and letting God take care of it.

Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit[e] through faith.

Beyond good things happening in life, some may think that our salvation is based on how many “right things” we do.

We hear the voice of God, not with the outward ear alone, but with the inward ear; we hear it as God’s Word, and we believe it to be so; that is the “hearing” of faith. It’s to believe what God says to be true.

One thing that was normal in the old testament was the prophets declaring “Hear! The Word of the Lord.

Now today people can hear something and it goes in one ear and out the other or they listen to answer back instead of hearing to understand.

now on sundays I don’t think we are really hearing the word if we’re focused on what we are going to say right after service or we’re thinking about what we are going to have for lunch.

That’s just not honoring the Lord.

God wants us to have a faith that hears Him speak but, to go even further God wants us to have a faith that obeys what He says.

Now a parent might tell their child to clean up their room but, a child can hear them without listening to them.

They can hear what they said but to actually listen to them is to take action and actually to do it.

It’s the idea that if our good deeds outweigh the bad, we’ll be granted access into paradise after we die.

in contrast, if we are a “bad” person we’ll never set foot past the pearly gates.

In truth, God cares how we live.

He wants us to be generous and show compassion to others, but our relationship with God comes through faith in Jesus—not through our good deeds

Ephesians 2:8-9 ESV

8 For by grace you have been saved through faith. And this is not your own doing; it is the gift of God, 9 not a result of works, so that no one may boast.

Paul's discussion of faith, law, and works can be understood in Galatians chapter 3.

He emphasizes that God's people have always been justified by faith in God.

Abraham is an example: "Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham.

(Galatians 3:7–9).

Paul then quotes the prophet Habakkuk, saying, "Now it is evident that no one is justified before God by the law, for 'The righteous shall live by faith.' But the law is not of faith, rather 'The one who does them shall live by them'" (vv. 11–12).

Some Christians, and even those in Galatia, have a misunderstanding of redemption, not recognizing that it comes through having faith in God's salvation first and obedience to his word naturally occurring out of that faith.

The Apostle Paul confirms that the old covenant was based on grace, as does James the brother of Jesus (Romans 10; James 2).

So Paul wasn't against the Law, only against using it to boast, or misusing it to exclude others (Romans 3).

In verse 10, Paul writes that "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.'"

The Galatian believers were turning to the way of law because they thought by keeping the requirements of the law they could gain entrance into the Jewish nation and thus be assured of acceptance as God's people.

But clearly acceptance by God, justification before God, cannot possibly be found through the law: according to the Scriptures, righteousness comes by faith

Sometimes we can define the Christian life as only doing what is good, regardless of whether we want to or not.

James 2:14-26 ESV

### Faith Without Works Is Dead

14 What good is it, my brothers, if someone says he has faith but does not have works? Can that faith save him? 15 If a brother or sister is poorly clothed and lacking in daily food, 16 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[a] is that? 17 So also faith by itself, if it does not have works, is dead.

18 But someone will say, “You have faith and I have works.” Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. 19 You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe—and shudder! 20 Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? 21 Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? 22 You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; 23 and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, “Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”—and he was called a friend of God. 24 You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. 25 And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? 26 For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.

But God wants to change us from the inside out. Our good deeds should reflect a character and life that are being transformed by the Holy Spirit. ‘

It is one thing to do good in the world with the expectation that we'll receive good in return; it is another to have good deeds spring from the core of who we are, knowing that we have already received something unsurpassably good through the life, death, and resurrection of Christ.

the emphasis on faith over works encourages believers to cultivate a personal relationship with Christ, trusting in His righteousness rather than their own. It calls for a life of humility, recognizing that salvation is a gift from God. At the same time, it inspires believers to live out their faith actively, serving others and reflecting the love of Christ in their daily lives.