

THE ESSENCE OF SIN

“Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh?” —GALATIANS 3:3

One of the most important things to discover about the Christian life, and what the devil will seek to undermine more than anything else is the indispensability of Jesus Christ to its working. If the Christian life was nothing more than something we lived for God, it would be reduced to the ranks of just another religion, and would be dull and legalistic. The Christian life is not something we live for God, but something God lives in us. From start to finish, it is a life of faith in God’s ability to work.

So serious was the error of the church in Galatia in believing they received the Spirit of God by works rather than by faith that Paul describes them as having been ‘bewitched’. He tells them, “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard?” (Galatians 3:1-2) Every Christian is called to live by faith and it has nothing to do with good deeds, good works, our giving or how we earn a living, but everything to do with our attitude toward God. This is so vital that the alternative to living by faith is living in sin.

Biblically speaking, when something is described as being a “faith work”, it is simply being stated that it is not a “sin work”. When people profess they are “living by faith”, they are saying they are not “living in sin”. The Christian life is living in dependence on God, and the only

other alternative is to be living in independence of Him. It is this attitude of being in independence of God that is the essence of sin.

When speaking of the work of the Holy Spirit, Jesus told His disciples, “When he comes, he will convict the world of guilt in regard to sin and righteousness and judgement: in regard to sin, because men do not believe in me...” (John 16:8-9). Sin is all that does not derive from belief in Jesus Christ. This is not an intellectual, pragmatic belief in merely the existence of Christ, but experiential as we come to know Christ better and allow Him to work in our lives.

What pleases God is letting Him be God in our lives. It is living by faith, holding a disposition toward Jesus Christ that recognizes His authority as Lord over us and His empowering as our life within us.

PRAYER: Dear Lord, I ask that You live your life in me to the full, and help me to be wholly dependent on You. Thank You, Lord.

TO REFLECT UPON: In what areas of my life do I need to depend on Christ more?