

I. Intro

A. Focus Scripture: **Gal. 3:1-5**

¹ O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ⁴ Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Gal. 3:1-5)

B. Pray

C. Recap

Grace of God + Good Efforts = God's Approval

II. Body

A. Ain't Nothing Changed (**Gal. 3:1-5**)

1. **Question:** **Who put the evil eye on you (Gal. 3:1)?**

Bewitched (*baskaino* #H940): to cast an evil eye, to bring evil by charm and flattery, to mislead with smooth words as if by witchcraft.

- a. The **evil eye** is a curse believed to be cast by an ugly glare, usually given to a person when they are unaware. Many cultures believe that receiving the evil eye will cause misfortune or injury.
 - i. Taunted by their own foolish superstition.
- b. The Galatians received this good news as if they were looking at a clear portrait of Jesus on the cross. There was no doubt that the only thing they had to trust in, rest in, and brag about was wrapped up in the Person of Jesus Christ.

2. **Question:** Did you acquire the Holy Spirit by your own great power – Initiation (v. 2)?

² *This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Gal. 3:2)*

- a. Absolutely not
- b. You simply believed (while in your state of brokenness and poverty). It was at your point of helplessness that the Holy Spirit came into your body and sealed you until the day of redemption
 - i. **Eph. 1:13-14:** ¹³ *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, to the praise of His glory.*
 - ii. **2 Cor. 1:21-22:** ²¹ *Now He who establishes us with you in Christ and has anointed us is God, ²² who also has sealed us and given us the Spirit in our hearts as a guarantee.*

*Either it was given to you or you earned it.

c. Vocab:

Spirit (Faith): *as a consequence of our faith (trust and reliance) on Jesus, the Holy Spirit took up residence within us and alone accomplishes in us/ through us what the Father demands from us (justification, sanctification, etc.)*

Vs.

Works of Law (Flesh): *as a consequence of our faith (trust and reliance) in our own abilities, we reject the free gift of the Spirit and attempt to prove that we can accomplish what the Father demands (justification, sanctification, etc.)*

3. **Question: If you started in Christ by relying on His strength (salvation), why would you switch up and start relying on Your strength (Sanctification)? (v.3-5)**

³ Are you so foolish? Having **begun in the Spirit**, are you now being **made perfect by the flesh**? ⁴ Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

⁵ Therefore **He who supplies the Spirit** to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (**Gal. 3:3-5**)

a. Implication of the gospel is that the only thing powerful enough to overcome abounding sin, was super-abounding grace.

i. But depending on personal effort communicates that the inexhaustible riches of grace/ power (**Eph. 1:19**) toward us is not enough to complete the deal in our daily lives.

b. Vocab

i. Justified (*dikaioo* #1344): *the virtue or quality of one who is perfect, without flaw, without blemish. Essence of who God is and what He demands.*

- After being tried and examined in a cosmic court of law, justification a legal term that represents the final verdict for the One who is absolutely without error.
- Imagine being arrested (by God), pulled into a courtroom (where God is the prosecuting attorney, the judge and the jury).
- After all the evidence is presented, the gavel drops and you hear the eternal sentence: Not guilty (without flaw, without issues, etc.)

ii. Sanctified (*hagiazō* #37): *to be purified, to be made holy, to perfect, to be set apart (includes the character that is developed from such setting apart)*

c. Perfect: To bring to completion, perfection, finality

³ Are you so foolish? Having **begun in the Spirit**, are you now being **made perfect by the flesh**? (Gal. 3:3)

- i. Do you think that you're brought to completion by your own power and ability?
- ii. Salvation by faith (Not all that controversial)
 - **He (Jesus) saves**
- iii. Sanctification by faith (A little tough to swallow)
 - **He (Jesus) sanctifies** and perfects

d. Everything the Father does and has done for us, can only be accessed by faith.

⁵ Therefore **He who supplies the Spirit** to you and works miracles among you, does *He do it* by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (**Gal. 3:5**)

- iv. Paul Prayed that people would catch the idea that God Perfects & Sanctifies.

Phil. 1:6: *I thank my God upon every remembrance of you, always in every prayer of mine making request for you all with joy, for your fellowship in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete it until the day of Jesus Christ.*

1 Thess. 5:23: ²³ *Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.* ²⁴ *He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.*

B. Did the Requirements for Righteousness Change?

- 1. Premise: O.T. saints were saved by keeping the law.
While N.T. saints are now saved by grace.
 - a. Error

⁶ Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was **accounted** to him for righteousness.” (Gal. 3:6)

2. **Abraham:** ⁵ Then He brought him outside and said, "Look now toward heaven, and count the stars if you are able to number them." And He said to him, "So shall your descendants be." ⁶ And **he believed in the LORD**, and He **accounted** it to him for righteousness (**Gen. 15:5-6**).

- a. Abraham simply trusted God.
- b. Abraham wasn't righteous (without flaw) in and of himself.
 - i. He was credited with righteousness.

⁶ Just as Abraham "believed God, and it was **accounted** to him for righteousness."

⁷ Therefore know that only those who are of faith are sons of Abraham. ⁸ And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel to Abraham beforehand, saying, "**In you all the nations shall be blessed.**" ⁹ So then those who are of faith are blessed with believing Abraham. (**Gal. 3:6-9**)

- c. Abraham caught the truth of the gospel (as veiled as it was:
 - i. Abraham (in his own strength) was a liar and a sheister who came from a family of idol worshipers.
 - ii. But Abraham believed the message he was given. He trusted that God would do in and through him what he could never do on his own.
 - iii. It was good news and Abraham believed it. He delighted in God's provision. So God credited Abraham with righteousness and a place of honor.

3. Everyone who believed trusted God for the gospel message of hope, received the same blessing that Abraham did.

⁹ So all who put their faith in Christ share the same blessing Abraham received because of his faith. (**Gal. 3:9 – NLT**)

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- a. **Noah:**⁹ *This is the genealogy of Noah. Noah was a just man, perfect in his generations. Noah walked with God (Gen. 6:9)*
 - i. Noah had real issues (**Gen. 9:20-21**)
 - ii. Sobriety issues
 - iii. Led to deep family issues
 - b. **David:** *Blessed is he whose transgression is forgiven, Whose sin is covered. ² Blessed is the man to whom the Lord does not impute iniquity, And in whose spirit there is no deceit. (Psalms 32:1-2)*
 - i. David had real issues (**2 Sam. 11**)
 - ii. Backbiter, Adulterer and Murderer

III. Conclusion: If Pleasing God is Based on my Personal Ability, I'm Cursed

¹⁰ *For as many as are of the works of the law are under the curse; for it is written, "Cursed is everyone who does not continue in all things which are written in the book of the law, to do them." (Gal. 3:10)*

A. Galatians pronounces an unmistakable curse

- 1. Not on atheists and agnostics who don't believe, but on professing believers who try to serve God in a self-reliant way
 - a. Diminishes His grace, His glory and instead exalts our own pride.
- 2. Satan's trick is to get us to depend on our own strength.
 - a. Talk Christianese talk, attend Christian churches, pray here and there like good religious people, avoid a couple of big sins and that will put you in line for a blessing.
- 3. **James 2:10:** *"For whoever shall keep the whole law, and yet stumble in one point, he is guilty of all."*

B. The Bible goes above and beyond to prove that the keeping of the Law never earned God's blessing. Instead, it earns you a curse.

¹¹ *But that no one is justified by the law in the sight of God is evident, for “the just shall live by faith.” (Gal. 3:11)*

- a. The Bible’s Consistent Theme:
 - i. We come to Christ by faith alone.
 - ii. All God has for us is by faith alone.
- b. The Christian experience is not simply about saying a prayer of faith on one special day.
- c. The Christian experience is more about a LIFE of faith. A life of personal abandonment.
 - i. **Hab. 2:4:** *“Behold the proud, His soul is not upright in him; But the just shall live by his faith.”*
 - ii. **Rom. 1:17:** ¹⁶ *For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ, for it is the power of God to salvation for everyone who believes, for the Jew first and also for the Greek. ¹⁷ For in it the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith; as it is written, “The just shall live by faith.”*
 - iii. **Heb. 10:38:** *Now the just shall live by faith; But if anyone draws back, My soul has no pleasure in him.”*

C. The Curse Comes with a Choice (v. 12-14)

¹² *Yet the law is not of faith, but “the man who does them shall live by them.”*

¹³ *Christ has redeemed us from the curse of the law, having become a curse for us (for it is written, “Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree”), ¹⁴ that the blessing of Abraham might come upon the Gentiles in Christ Jesus, that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith. (Gal. 3:12-14)*

- 1. **Choice #1:** Everyone who wants to be under the curse of the law, can stay there (cursing themselves by relying on self).
 - a. Personal Reliance on self has NEVER worked!
 - b. Paul said that according to his former limited, legalistic understanding of the law... He had every right to boast in his own personal worth and ability (**Phil. 3:6**)

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- i. **Phil. 3:4b-6:** “...If anyone else thinks he may have confidence in the flesh, I more so: Circumcised the eighth day, of the stock of Israel, of the tribe of Benjamin, a Hebrew of the Hebrews; concerning the law, a Pharisee; concerning zeal, persecuting the church; concerning the righteousness which is in the law, blameless”*
 - c. After placing all his trust in himself. After all of his years of strict law-keeping, Paul realized that He was actually under a curse.*
 - i. That’s horrible news!*
 - 2. Choice #2:** Everyone who wants to be under the blessing can be under the blessing (just like Abraham).
 - a. Christ came to redeem us from the curse of the law.*
 - b. Jesus fulfilled all the law’s demands, and then offers that to us and offers to do that in us.*
 - c. Jesus perfectly fulfilled all the law, but not in a legalistic, self-promoting way.*
 - i. Instead, he promoted his Father.*
 - ii. He obeyed His Father.*
 - iii. He trusted His Father in everything.*
 - iv. He relied on the power of the Holy Spirit at all points*
 - d. When Jesus experienced the curse of the law, recognize that it was not him that was cursed. It was us.*
 - i. **Is. 53:4-6:** “Surely He has borne our griefs and carried our sorrows; Yet we esteemed Him stricken, Smitten by God, and afflicted. ⁵ But He was wounded for our transgressions, He was bruised for our iniquities; The chastisement for our peace was upon Him, And by His stripes we*

*are healed. ⁶All we like sheep have gone astray;
We have turned, every one, to his own way; And
the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.*

D. **Question**: Will you kill self-reliance today, and instead rely on Christ alone (for everything)?

1. Jesus is here to take you out of the curse. Will you trust Him or trust you?