

Today we continue with our series in the Book of Galatians. Galatians is a call for freedom from the dependence on the Law for salvation. Galatians has been called the “Declaration of Independence of Christian liberty.” (enduringword) The Law serves a vital and important role as a tutor, a guide to lead us to Jesus Christ who is the true source of salvation. **As you read Galatians, look for two central themes:**

- The Law was insufficient to take away our sins and bring us salvation.,
- It is only through faith in Jesus that we can be saved and reconciled with God.

<https://virtualbiblestudy.com/lessons/galatians/2/>

Charles Spurgeon a well-known preacher of years gone by once told this story that applies well to today’s topic. Two men were on white water river adventure when they came upon a stretch of particularly stretch of severe rapids. They were both tossed violently into the treacherous waters. Along the shore a group of people saw their plight and tried to offer help. They found a long rope and threw the rope out to the men. Thankfully one of the men was able to grab the rope and be pulled ashore. Sadly, the other man made a choice to grab hold of a passing log and held on, as good and strong as the log was it was not sufficient to protect the man from, the rapids and he was never seen again. Faith, Spurgeon remarked, is like grabbing the rope from the shore; it is our saving connection to Jesus Christ. Grabbing onto the log is like trusting in good works, it seems to work for a while, but its end is doom.

This is the point that Paul is making in Galatians 3. Paul is sternly addressing the bad decisions that the young, immature Galatian churches were making by placing works and religious actions along side faith in Christ as necessary. Paul is adamant in his assertion that faith is superior to works and religion. Again, I want to reassert, that Paul is NOT saying that works and obedience to laws and regulations are not good, he is warning about placing our trust in the “LOG” of works and human effort, rather than the “SAVING ROPE” of faith in Jesus Christ.

As a reminder, two weeks ago, we investigated Chapter 1 and felt Paul’s Anguished Heart over the failures of his ‘spiritual children’ in the churches of Galatia. On his Missionary Journeys he, along with Barnabas had helped bring these people to faith in Jesus and become Christians. He probably had baptized a lot of them; he had helped establish their churches and set up elders or leaders in each church. Sadly, after Paul’s departure a group of supposedly Christian Jews (Judaizers), also known as the “Party of Circumcision” came in and captured their immature faith and polluted them a legalistic focus. I mentioned that it was a “Jesus +” gospel. They still seemed to put forth faith in Christ as the Messiah, but they insisted that in addition to that faith you had to be circumcised (males) and all had to follow the law of Moses. So, in a sense it was a “Jesus + Moses” gospel. This “Jesus +” belief was dangerous then and new forms of this are still dangerous in our own day & age.

Last week we saw Paul become a **Freedom Fighter, Standing for Truth**. We discovered the two (2) enemies that Paul had to deal with...

(1) Legalism, and (2) Hypocrisy. Paul is an example of a true Spiritual Freedom Fighter, one who is willing to “Stand for the Truth”. I think you would agree that we too are called to be Freedom Fighters in our own day & age. We can also learn the proper way to Fight for Truth from Paul – By Faith in Jesus Christ and in the Power of the Holy Spirit.

Today, in Chapter 3 we see **Paul the Freedom Fighter move into the role of a JAG Officer – (Judge Advocate General)**. Keeping this same theme of military terminology, he brings his case against the disobedient Soldier Saints in Galatia. Like an expert Attorney, Paul the JAG Officer brings a strong case for the guilty parties to consider.

1st – Paul questions their understanding of the facts.
Galatians 3: 1-5... ¹ *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 the flesh?* ⁴ *Did you suffer 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—*

Paul gives his ‘opening arguments’ with great force and power. Paul is direct and stern as he twice addresses the Galatians as ‘foolish’ - <453> ἀνόητος *anoetos* - foolish(5), foolish men(1).

We must make a distinction between the word Paul uses here in Galatians and the bible verses in Matthew 5:22, where Jesus in His Sermon on the Mount declares

^{NIV} **Matthew 5:22...** *But I tell you that anyone who is angry with his brother will be subject to judgment. Again, anyone who says to his brother, 'Raca, 'is answerable to the Sanhedrin. But anyone who says, 'You fool!' will be in danger of the fire of hell.*

The Greek word in this passage is <3474> μωρός *moros* = *dull, stupid, foolish. (carries the idea of a godless immoral person)*

In this Galatians 3 passage the Greek word carries more of the idea of spiritually dull, lacking in wisdom and discernment. This dullness makes sense when you realize that these Galatians were very new and immature believers. However, that does not excuse them from making the right choices as Paul reasserts the role and power of the Holy Spirit. Remember, new believers and mature believers have the same Holy Spirit in the same measure. We just need to allow the Holy Spirit to control our lives and let “**Christ live in us**” as “**we die to self**”, as we learned last week in Galatians 2:20.

Freedom Fighter turned JAG Attorney asks four (4) rapid fire questions to get the true facts to the forefront and make sure the Galatians understand the facts about faith.

1. (vs.2) *Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

- 2.** (vs 3) *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?*
- 3.** (vs. 4) *Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?*
- 4.** (vs. 5) *Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and performs miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?*

IN summary, Paul is asking them to quit being dull and come out from under the “*bewitching*” spell that the Judaizers had put them under and come to their “spiritual senses”. Paul is taking a questioning style approach to try and teach these immature believers about the power, role and necessity of the Holy Spirit. In other New Testament books, we see that the Holy Spirit:

Convicts people of their sin; we are born of the Spirit & baptized by the Spirit; sealed by the Spirit; we are to walk in the Spirit; be filled with the Spirit; we are not to grieve the Spirit or quench the Spirit. Obviously, these Galatians were guilty of grieving and quenching the Spirit.

JAG Attorney Paul then addresses the 2nd point in his case against these Galatian churches.

2nd— Paul Calls the Witnesses Abraham & Moses. **Galatians 3:6-21**

In this next extended passage Paul takes the court on a Spiritual History Journey. He reminds them of the Covenant of Faith with Abraham and the Covenant of the Law with Moses. Sadly, the Judaizers made the mistake of viewing the Covenant of Faith with Abraham through the lens of the Covenant of Works/Law of Moses.

In reality, Paul makes the case that we should do just the opposite. View the Covenant of Works as an outgrowth and extension of the Covenant of Faith with Abraham. The key point is that works and law are a great tutor and guide but they are not the main point. Faith first then works grow out of that faith. The Galatians were letting the tail of works wag the Dog of Faith.

Galatians 3:6-21... *‘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 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. 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.” 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 Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promised Spirit through faith. ¹⁵ To give a human example, brothers: even with a man-made covenant, no one annuls it or adds to it once it has been ratified. ¹⁶ Now the promises were made to Abraham and to his offspring. It does not say, “And to offsprings,” referring to many, but referring to one, “And to your*

offspring,” who is Christ. ¹⁷ This is what I mean: the law, which came 430 years afterward, does not annul a covenant previously ratified by God, so as to make the promise void. ¹⁸ For if the inheritance comes by the law, it no longer comes by promise; but God gave it to Abraham by a promise. ¹⁹ Why then the law? It was added because of transgressions, until the offspring should come to whom the promise had been made, and it was put in place through angels by an intermediary. ²⁰ Now an intermediary implies more than one, but God is one. ²¹ Is the law then contrary to the promises of God? Certainly not! For if a law had been given that could give life, then righteousness would indeed be by the law.

Time will not allow us to go into great detail here. Let me give you two summary statements (Anders. Holman Commentary)

1. Abraham, who lived before the official giving of the law (430 yrs) was saved by faith. The blessings of Abraham (inheritance, sonship and eternal life) were received by faith. He was saved and justified BEFORE his circumcision. Therefore, grace is superior to the Law.

2. The law’s purpose was never to save and cannot justify us. Its purpose was to be a standard, a tutor a guide to show us the magnitude of our sin, our need for grace, and thus lead us to the only true source of salvation – Jesus Christ. Thus, grace is superior to the Law. can only bring awareness of error and judgment. Therefore, grace is superior to the Law.

Time is getting away, let’s get to the closing statement of Paul Freedom Fighter, JAG Officer. Attorney of Grace...

3rd – Paul’s Closing Remarks Focus on the Need for Faith in the All-Sufficient Work of Christ.

Galatians 3:22-29... ²² *But the Scripture imprisoned everything under sin, so that the promise by faith in Jesus Christ might be given to those who believe.* ²³ *Now before faith came, we were held captive under the law, imprisoned until the coming faith would be revealed.* ²⁴ *So then, the law was our guardian until Christ came, in order that we might be justified by faith.* ²⁵ *But now that faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian,* ²⁶ *for in Christ Jesus you are all sons of God, through faith.* ²⁷ *For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ.* ²⁸ *There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.* ²⁹ *And if you are Christ's, then you are Abraham's offspring, heirs according to promise.*

The law had its purpose, not to save, but to point out our need to be saved and who to go to for that salvation. The Law pointed out our separation from God by our sin. Grace reveals the fact that we can become part of God’s family through faith in Jesus Christ. No longer separated, no longer captive to the guardian of the Law but set free to live in Right Relationship as children (offsprings) of God .

My Personal Closing Statement: It takes a trust in the Power of Christ and sufficiency of Christ to have a true faith, a Jesus Only faith.

It reminds me of a humorous story about a man who was dangling perilously from a rope on a steep cliffside. He cried out “Can anyone up there help me”?

He heard a heavenly voice say Yes, I can Help, but first you must let go of the rope. “What! Cried the man. If I let go I will fall”! The voice replied, “Trust me, I will catch you”. After a long pause the dangling man called out “Is there anybody else up there who can help me”?

I challenge you to let go and let God. Put your trust in God, let Christ fill you, and fulfill the true purpose of our lives...

To Be Powerful Witnesses of Gods’ Good News Story,
Motivated by Love and Empowered By the Holy Spirit.

How would you fare if your faith was put on trial...
Is there enough evidence to convict you of being a
Christian?

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