

Title: **Don't Forget the Change (Part 2)**

Passage: **Galatians 3:2-5**

Theme: **Paul's First Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: The Galatians**

Number: **0915Ga3.2-5(29)**

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{{Read Passage}}

[i] Kingdom of the Cults and 1st c. Judaizers . . .

Dr. Walter Martin's classic, "The KD of t/Cults" is a trem. ref. work. Nearly 700 pp. of mat. on various modern-day cults and religious movements. (LDS to Theosophy).

Had KD of t/Cults had been written in t/1st c. (would have been a much smaller book) but no doubt t/first chapter would have been devoted to a group known as t/Judaizers ("party of the circum." 2:12).

We see them at work in Galatians – they are key to understanding what's going on t/o t/letter.

Judaizer comes from a verb in 2:14 →

“. . . how is it that you compel the Gentiles to live like Jews?

Entire phrase "To live like Jews" comes from t/single word Ἰουδαῖζω – tranlit. int Engl. as Judaize.

Paul isn't talking about t/rank & file Israelite.

He's referring to a specific group of people – what may be considered as t/very first organized group of pseudo-Xn heretics.

[ii] They were the ones who prompted the first church council: Acts 15
1 AND some men came down from Judea and began teaching the
brethren, “Unless you are circumcised according to the custom of
Moses, you cannot be saved.”

Same group that had already by this time (roughly AD 49) infiltrated
t/Gal. CH's. Their message? Believe in JC and Keep the Law or you
cannot be saved.

Justification = X + Law.

That intrusion of works into t/gospel of grace is what Paul warns
about in chapt. 1 – ἕτερος εὐαγγέλιον – “diff. gospel” – which is no
“gospel” at all.

True gospel centers on justification by faith alone – a point Paul
makes in that key verse: 2:16.

... a man is not justified by the works of the Law but through faith in
Christ Jesus, even we have believed in Christ Jesus, that we may be
justified by faith in Christ, and not by the works of the Law; since by
the works of the Law shall no flesh be justified.

Only way to be justified / to be saved from t/condemnation of sin is
through believing in JC as t/one who suffered, died, rose again in
t/place of sinners.

That's t/doctrine – the great truth apart from which there is no gospel –
t/great truth that was reignited during t/16th c. Reform. – t/good news
that we have believed – t/good news that Paul defends in chapt 3-4.

[iii] Paul begins that defense in 3:1-5 by reminding the Galatians of their personal experience coming out of paganism into the light of X

Paul moves from his experience w/X as proving his apostleship to

t/Gal. experience w/the Holy Spirit as proving that they were justified by faith alone, not by works of t/Law.

[iv] Summary . . .

The Galatians' Spiritual Experience Was Received by Believing, not Doing

The gift of the Spirit is received by believing not doing.

Justification by Faith Alone: Don't Forget the Change

[v] Six Rhetorical Questions

6 R?'s that Paul asks in rapid-fire succession –

* *Who has bewitched you?*

* *Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?*

* *Are you so foolish?*

* *Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?*

* *Did you suffer so many things in vain?*

* *Does He provide you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?*

I. Paul's First Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Don't Forget the Change (3:1-5)

Trinitarian formula (outline):

A. Has Christ Changed You? (3:1)

B. Has the Holy Spirit Changed You? (3:2-4)

C. Has the Father Changed You? (3:5)

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I. Paul's First Defense of Justification by Faith Alone: Don't Forget the Change (3:1-5)

First “change” Paul addresses is that brought about by JC →

A. Has Christ Changed You? (3:1)

O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

1. First Rhetorical Question: Who Duped You?

1. Second Question: Did You Receive the Spirit by Doing or Believing? (v. 2)

Note how t/verse begins:

This is the only thing I want to learn from you:

a. The central question // crucial // critical // chief

All t/other ?'s asked in these 5 vv. hinge on and relate to this one.

Why Paul prefaces it with:

This is the only thing I want to learn from you:

What is that one thing?

. . . did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

B. Has the Holy Spirit Changed You? (3:2-4)

If so, “how?”

1. “Receive” = Aorist Verb – Past action / Moment of Salvation

Entrance into t/faith // justification.

Central to Paul's theology (theology of the entire Bible): when a person comes to faith and is justified that individual receives the gift of the H.S.

a. Romans 8:1–10

1 THERE is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.² For the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has set you free from the law of sin and of death.³ For what the Law could not do, weak as it was through the flesh, God did: sending His own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh and as an offering for sin, He condemned sin in the flesh,⁴ in order that the requirement of the Law might be fulfilled in us, who do not walk according to the flesh, but according to the Spirit.⁵ For those who are according to the flesh set their minds on the things of the flesh, but those who are according to the Spirit, the things of the Spirit.⁶ For the mind set on the flesh is death, but the mind set on the Spirit is life and peace,⁷ because the mind set on the flesh is hostile toward God; for it does not subject itself to the law of God, for it is not even able to do so;⁸ and those who are in the flesh cannot please God.

9 However, you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. But if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he does not belong to Him.¹⁰ And if Christ is in you, though the body is dead because of sin, yet the spirit is alive because of righteousness.

2. This was the mark of a new age of salvation, that which was predicted by the OT prophets

a. Book of Acts –

1:4–5 4 And gathering them together, He commanded them not to leave Jerusalem, but to wait for what the Father had promised, “Which,” He said, “you heard of from Me;⁵ for John baptized with water, but you shall be baptized with the Holy Spirit not many days from now.”

Next chapter you have t/birth of t/NT CH – t/HS is poured out upon God's ppl.

Peter cites t/OT Prophet (Joel 2:28-32).

This is part and parcel with the New Covt predicted by the OT prophets (esp. Ezek. and Jer.) and fulfilled in t/death, burial and resurrection of Jesus – and the giving of t/Spirit at Pentecost.

. . . did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

Parallel back to 2:16 where you see t/same either or proposition: Justified by faith (belief) or the Law (works)?

Here: did you receive t/Spirit by t/Law (works) or by faith (belief)?

3. Here in 3:2 we have the first mention of the Holy Spirit in Galatians

We'll come back to t/ministry of t/Spirit later in t/book & we'll take a more detailed theological look at Spirit's work in t/life of t/believer.

Summarized, does one receive the Holy Spirit (salvation) by hearing and believing or by doing and obeying?

3:14 in order that in Christ Jesus the blessing of Abraham might come to the Gentiles, so that we might receive the promise of the Spirit through faith.

4:6-7 And because you are sons, God has sent forth the Spirit of His Son into our hearts, crying, "Abba! Father!" Therefore you are no longer a slave, but a son; and if a son, then an heir through God.

2. Third Question: Are You Really That Foolish? (v. 3a)

Are you so foolish?

J.B. Phps "Surely you can't be so idiotic";

NEB "Can it be that you are so stupid?"

Same word used in v. 1.

1. First Question: Who Duped You?

O foolish Galatians!

“ἀνόητος . . . denotes the stupidity that arises from deadness and impotence of intellect.” [Wuest, Ga 3:1]

Mental flabbiness – something that is endemic in the church today.

3. Fourth Question: Can Your Efforts Perfect What the Spirit Began?

(v. 3b)

Having begun by the Spirit are you now being perfected by the flesh?

Perf. by t/Flesh – perhaps a veiled reference to circumcision – t/ultimate work of t/flesh so to speak.

a. Note the contrast: Beginning and Completing

One thing to begin something; another to finish it. Cf. Phil. 1:6

Paul seems to be asking t/? – *“OK – you started t/Xn life by t/work of t/HS – are you doing to finish what He started on your own?”*

b. Paul deviates from what the Judaizers taught here

Judaizers didn't believe that justification was by faith alone, but sanctification – being perfected in t/Xn life – is by the Law. For them, t/entirety of salvation required t/Law – getting in & staying in.

Dr. Tom Scheiner:

The false teachers were not giving advice about progress in the Christian life, for their view, as in Judaism, was that circumcision was required for entrance into the people of God. Therefore, the Judaizers argued that those uncircumcised were not part of the covenant enacted by the Lord (Gen 17:9–14; Lev 12:3). The Judaizers argued that the Galatians must be circumcised to belong to the people of God.

Paul, however, believed that the Galatians were Christians because they had already received the Spirit. Hence, he frames the matter in terms of progress in the Christian life. In other words, Paul writes from his perspective; he was not even willing to grant the premise of the false teachers. He assumes that the Galatians are Christians, and thus he describes their desire to be circumcised as a misguided attempt to make progress in the Christian life on the basis of the flesh instead of the Spirit.

We see here as well that the Christian life follows the same course whether the issue is justification or sanctification. It is not as if justification is through the Spirit and by faith, and sanctification is by works and human effort. Both justification and sanctification are due to the Spirit's work and are the result of faith. [Schreiner, 184–185]

Inconceivable! To begin by t/sov. work of t/Spirit & then attempt to perfect that work on t/basis of your own works?

Like starting up your car in t/morning, then getting out to push it down t/road.

Colossians 2:6–7 **6 As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him, 7 having been firmly rooted and now being built up in Him and established in your faith, just as you were instructed, and overflowing with gratitude.**

4. Fifth Question: Did You Suffering For Nothing? (v. 4)

Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

a. Translation Issue

Eng. translations split between 2 words that have different meanings: “suffer” and “experience.”

“Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?”
[NASB / ESV (ESV note “experience”)]

“Were all your experiences wasted? I hope not!” [NCV]

“Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain?”
[NIV (note “suffered”)]

(1) Verb πάσχω

Word used of t/suffering of JC (cf. Paschal Lamb):

1 Peter 2:23 . . . while suffering, He uttered no threats, but kept entrusting Himself to Him who judges righteously;

Suffering is neg. But t/word can be used in a neutral or even pos. sense of “experience.”

That would seem to fit t/context which is why some Engl. translations go w/that option.

Cf. context. Paul's talking about t/Galatians' experiences. Note v. 5.

Problem as I see it: every time this word is used in t/LXX it's used in t/neg. sense of suffering.

41 other uses in t/NT are used t/same way.

Seems highly unlikely that Paul means something different here.

Some have claimed that there's no record of these 1st c. Galatian believers suffering.

4:29 seems to indicate that they were being persecuted.

Go back to t/founding of these CH's in Acts 14 you see persecution and suffering.

Acts 14:22 **strengthening the souls of the disciples, encouraging them to continue in the faith, and saying, "Through many tribulations we must enter the kingdom of God."**

Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

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C. Has the Father Changed You? (3:5)

1. Sixth Question: Does He Provide the Spirit by Your Doing or Believing?

This verse parallels v. 1.

Consequently, indicates that Paul is bringing his argument to an end.

does He provide you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

a. God has done 2 things for them:

(1) He provides them with the Spirit

Idea of “abundantly,” “giving freely and liberally.”

Present tense – t/gift of t/Spirit is not merely in the past but in progress.

(2) work miracles among you

The association of the Spirit with miracles – sign miracles?

This was an early letter, so I would assume that there were sign miracles that accompanied the establishing of these churches. Apostles are still on the scene.

2 Corinthians 12:12 **The signs of a true apostle were performed among you with all perseverance, by signs and wonders and miracles.**

Application today?

... does He provide you with the Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?

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Concluding Thoughts - Application

The Doctrine of Justification – Even the Gospel – Is For Us Today.

As Christians we need to relearn the gospel every day. We are prone to wander, as the old hymn says, and hence we may act as if a spell has been cast over us. The Christian life is a battle to rely on the gospel, and even as Christians we are inclined to look to ourselves and trust in our own achievements rather than relying solely on the cross of Christ. In our counseling and our preaching and teaching we must summon people over and over to the cross of Christ and call them to look away from themselves and focus on Christ. We may slowly drift from the gospel, just as the Galatians did. The problems Paul addressed in Galatia remind us all that the Christian life cannot be lived on autopilot, that there is a daily struggle to grasp the gospel. [Schreiner, 186–187]

The Gift of the Spirit – Is For Us Today.

We not only were saved by a sov. work of t/H.S. – we are kept by that same Spirit & we walk by t/power and abundant supply of that same Spirit.

A mark of an authentic CH as apart from dry religiosity is t/vibrant work of t/H.S. in t/midts of God's people.

The Gift of Grace – Is For Us Today.

You cannot perfect by t/flesh what God does by grace.

Retracing Babe Ruth's signature on a baseball.

Remember What He Has Done.

When upon life's billows you are tempest-tossed,
When you are discouraged, thinking all is lost,
Count your many blessings, name them one by one,
And it will surprise you what the Lord has done.

Galatians experience w/the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit – work of t/Triune God.

What has He done for you and in you and thru you?

Saved you. Keeps you. Given you a family, t/CH.

So many of us can look at how God has delivered us – from catastrophe in some cases.

Spouses / Children / Provisions.

Look at t/world around us – a world sick w/sin – and we say “there but t/grace of God go I.”

Keep your eyes on the cross.

Philip Graham Ryken (president of Wheaton College) tells t/story of a painting by t/19th c. artist Hendrik Leys. The painting is called 'Women Praying at a Crucifix near St. James in Antwerp.'

The women themselves are portrayed with painstaking detail. Careful attention is paid to every fold in the fabric of their gowns. Likewise, the background is painted to show the beauty of the garden by the church wall.

There is one thing missing from the painting, however, and this the cross itself. Leys shows the women at worship, but not the Christ they have come to adore.

'So what do we see?' asked the Dutch art critic Hans Rookmaker (1922-77). 'People from a past period, full of faith, reverent, praying—but we do not see the object of faith, the crucified Christ.'" [Adapted from Ryken, 92-93]

Lesson for us –

Keep your eyes on Jesus. He alone is not only t/author, but t/perfector of your faith.