CONTINUING IN THE SPIRIT

**DATE: 7/22/2015 Wed.**

**TEXT: Galatians 3:1-5**

**INTRODUCTION**

In Chapter 3, we begin the second division of this letter where Paul continues to deal with the differences between Law and Grace

In chapters 1 & 2 we heard the Gospel Defended

In chapters 3 & 4 we will hear the Gospel Explained

Paul will assert the Truth of the Gospel from the OT

Paul shows that Grace has always been God's Design for the salvation of man

And at the same time corrects the lie that salvation by Grace was a new and erroneous doctrine

Paul asks what has caused the Galatians to leave the Faith and to start relying on the Law

Few things are more tragic or disappointing than to see Believers desert the purity of the Gospel for some false form of religion

Religion is always man-made and tries to improve on God’s Plan for Salvation by adding works

This is what was beginning to happen in Galatia because of the False Teachers

I want to think on this thought

***“Continuing in the Spirit”***

Let’s stand and read **vs. 1-5** and then pray

**~~~Prayer~~~**

First let’s look at …

**I. THE “PROBLEM WITH THE GALATIANS” – v.1**

***“O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?”***

We don't have to worry about Paul beating around the bush

He takes the bull by the horns and gets right to the heart of the matter

First he tells them that …

**A. They Were ‘Fooled’**

***“who hath bewitched you,”***

They were Deep in Deception

**1.** It’s like someone, put *a spell* on them

The word *“****bewitched”*** means *to charm or fascinate by false representation*

It carries the idea of bringing evil upon someone by means of flattery and false praise

The legalists had charmed the Galatians into their legalism

**II Cor. 11:3 - *“(But I fear,) lest by any means, as the serpent beguiled Eve through his subtilty, so your minds should be corrupted from the simplicity that is in Christ”***

The word ***“beguiled”*** here carries the same sense

They had presented themselves in such a way that the Galatians were mesmerized and captivated as they came under their spell

The Galatians had fallen for the oldest trick in the book

In their lack of discernment they had fallen under the charm of flattery

**Proverbs 29:5 – *“A man that flattereth his neighbour spreadeth a net for his feet”***

Webster defines **Flattery** as *False praise; a commendation bestowed for the purpose of gaining favor and influence...*

Men love to be praised and the Bible teaches us to give honor to whom it is due

**Romans 13:7 – *“Render therefore to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due;***

***… custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour”***

But … the desire *to be* praised, gives the devil every opportunity to lay a net at our feet

There is a serious warning here for every believer

If we are not careful, we can get caught up just like the Galatians did

The Bible warns us over & over / Beware …

**II Cor. 2:11 – *“Lest Satan should get an advantage of us: for we are not ignorant of his devices”***

We are commanded in **Eph. 6:11** to – *“****Put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil”***

The word *“****wiles”*** means *method*

Satan has his methods

Satan is ruthless and merciless, and will stop at nothing to defeat you

One of his methods is to use false teachers like the Legalist who captivated the hearts of the Galatians

Satan can present himself through his false teachers in such a way as to mesmerize and charm even the people of God

Paul warned of this ability when he wrote about the false apostles of Corinth

**II Cor. 11:13, 14 – *“For such are false apostles, deceitful workers, transforming themselves into the apostles of Christ. And no marvel; for Satan himself is transformed into an angel of light”***

The foolish Galatians had been duped and brought into the bondage of legalism by these deceitful workers

**2.** However, God's Desire for us is found in …

**Ephesians 4:14 – *“That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive;”***

The word *“****sleight”*** is a gambling term and speaks of *trickery and fraud*

The word *“****craftiness”*** is used in the Bible to describe the way the Pharisees dealt with Jesus

It is also used of the serpent deceiving of Eve

These are deceivers who speak cleverly and shrewdly

They sound correct and they are convincing, but they are wrong and dangerous

We don’t have to be Fooled

**They were ‘Fooled’**

Therefore …

**B. They Became ‘Foolish’**

***“O foolish Galatians”***

They were Deficient in their Discernment

Paul uses the word ***“foolish”*** twice in our text

Paul's words, no doubt, cut straight to the heart

The word *“****foolish”*** means *ignorant, no understanding, unwise*

It speaks of someone who *lacks spiritual insight or discernment*

They had been taught the truth

But they had been foolish in that they failed in testing the Legalist against the truth they had been taught

**I John 4:1 *– “Beloved, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God: because many false prophets are gone out into the world”***

As a result, the False Teachers led them away from the truth and into bondage

This was indeed a sharp rebuke, but it was a biblical rebuke

Paul wrote **Titus (1:13)** concerning deceivers –

*“****Wherefore rebuke them sharply, that they may be sound in the faith;”***

The word *“****sharply”*** means *severely, abruptly, curtly, in a manner that cuts, rudely*

It means that we are not to beat around the bush and mince words

The reason for such sharp rebuke is *“****that they may be sound in the faith”***

**They Were ‘Fooled’**

**They Became ‘Foolish’**

**C. They Were ‘Fickle’** (likely to change)

***“that ye should not obey the Truth,”***

They were Disobedient in their Doctrine

**1.** The phrase *“****evidently set forth”*** means *to write before*

The idea is that of posting a public notice

It was used of posters, signs or public announcements that were placed out in the streets where the general public could see them

That is what Paul had done with the Gospel

He had clearly Preached and Presented the Truth of Salvation by Grace that they were without excuse not to understand

*Both* the details and the implications of the crucifixion were very clearly presented

**2.** Notice also that they had *“****not obeyed the truth”***

This was their biggest problem

They knew the truth, but they didn't obey it

They were spellbound by the ear tickling and platitudes of the Legalist

They were in trouble because they didn't take the Truth seriously

They were without excuse

They knew the Truth, but failed to keep it

Jesus said in **John 8:31, 32 – *“…******If ye continue in My Word, then are ye my disciples indeed; And ye shall know the Truth, and the Truth shall make you free”***

The Galatians had failed to continue in the Word and as a result had become

**(Galatians 5:1) – *“…entangled again with the yoke of bondage”***

Paul hit their error head on

Now he proceeds by asking 4 questions

4 Questions concerning The Spirit, Their Sanctification and Suffering

The questions are designed for a specific purpose

**THE “PROBLEM WITH THE GALATIANS”**

Now Paul moves onto …

**II. THE “PRIORITY OF FAITH” – vs. 2-4**

***“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?” “Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?” “Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain”***

**Hebrews 11:6 *– “But without faith it is impossible to please Him: for he that cometh to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of them that diligently seek Him”***

Paul asks 3 questions in the next 3 verses

These are again Rhetorical (A question having an obvious answer)

**A. How Did You Receive the Spirit? –v.2**

***“This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”***

This question has 2 parts

**1.** First Paul asks …

***“This only would I learn of you”***

What was it that he wanted to learn from them?

Paul says … *“tell me…”*

How were you saved? – (How) ***“Received ye the Spirit”***

The word ***“received”*** point back to when they got saved / past tense

**2.** He gives them 2 obvious choices / Faith or Works

***“Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”***

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the very moment of saving faith

The Faith that brings justification also brings the indwelling presence of the Holy Spirit

It takes place the moment someone is ***“born again”***

**John 1:12 –** ***“But as many as received Him, to them gave He power to become the sons of God, even to them that believe on His name”*** (coupled with)

**Galatians 4:6 – *“And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of His Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father”***

If you are genuinely saved you have the Spirit of God

**Romans 8:9 *– “But ye are not in the flesh, but in the Spirit, if so be that the Spirit of God dwell in you. Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of His”***

And No man has believed apart from the hearing of the Word of God

**Romans 10:17 – *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God”***

They heard Paul preach and they believed

They were then sealed with the Spirit until the day of redemption

**Ephesians 1:13 *– “In whom ye also trusted, after that ye heard the Word of Truth, the Gospel of your salvation: in whom also after that ye believed, ye were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise”***

**How Did You Receive the Spirit?**

**B. How Will You Be Made Perfect? –v.3**

***“Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”***

Again, ***“the flesh”*** speaks of the natural man as he is without Christ

The lost man does not have the Holy Spirit

Everything he does is accomplished with the power of his own ability and no lasting good comes of it

**John 6:63 –** ***“It is the Spirit that quickeneth; the flesh profiteth nothing: the words that I speak unto you, they are spirit, and they are life”***

Jesus said - ***“the flesh profiteth nothing***”

The Galatians had been saved by the Grace of God

However, they were being taught to return to the Law to receive God's favor and maintain their Christian life

What they had started by Grace they were attempting to finish by Works

-- **Grace** is God doing for us what we cannot do for ourselves

-- **Works** is man's attempt to do God’s work in his own power

Paul asks – ***“are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”***

The word ***“perfect”*** carries the idea *of bringing something to completion*

They had been saved by the regenerating work of the Spirit, but it didn't stop there

The Spirit of God continues in the believer's life to perfect him, that is, to bring his salvation to completion

-- Saved from the Penalty of Sin

-- Being saved from the Power of Sin

-- One Day we will be delivered Permanently from the Presence of Sin

Paul had taught the Philippian believers the same truth

**Phil 1:6 – *“Being confident of this very thing, that he which hath begun a good work in you will perform it until the day of Jesus Christ:”***

The work of the Holy Spirit begins with bringing a person to salvation …

Then He continues to conform the believer to the image of Christ

Paul had referred to them as foolish Galatians

It is absolutely foolish for someone to think that anything spiritual can be achieved through the power of the flesh

If a believer's new life in Christ began with a supernatural work of the Holy Spirit, it must continue in the same

**How Did You Receive the Spirit?**

**How Will You Be Made Perfect?**

**C. Why Did You Suffer? – v.4**

***“Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain”***

The Galatians had embraced the Christian faith

And because they did, they had been persecuted for it

In the early days of Christianity those who converted to Christ were made to suffer for their faith

The Jews & Romans were relentless in persecuting the early Church

The Galatians had been on the receiving end

The suffering referred to here is found in **Acts 14**

After his first missionary journey Paul along with Barnabas had gone back and ministered to the Galatian converts during their time of great suffering and persecution

**Acts 14:21, 22 says – *“And when they had preached the gospel to that city, and had taught many, they returned again to Lystra, and to Iconium, and Antioch, Confirming the souls of the disciples, and exhorting them to continue in the faith, and that we must through much tribulation enter into the kingdom of God”***

The message that had stirred up so much anger and resulted in so much persecution was the message of justification by faith through Jesus Christ alone

**Acts 13:38, 39 – “*Be it known unto you therefore, men and brethren, that through this man is preached unto you the forgiveness of sins: And by Him all that believe are justified from all things, from which ye could not be justified by the law of Moses”***

The Galatian believers who once stood so strong and suffered for the truth, had now been duped into reverting to the law

Paul asks the question – ***“Have ye suffered so many things in vain?”***

Paul is saying – *“if the Legalist are right in their doctrine, then you were fools for suffering for Christ as you did”*

**THE “PROBLEM WITH THE GALATIANS”**

**THE “PRIORITY OF FAITH”**

**III. THE “POWER OF THE LORD” – v.5**

***“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth He it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”***

God had given the Galatian believers the Holy Spirit and He had worked miracles among them

Paul's 4th question is again …

Did God do this *“****by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?”***

No one could doubt the fact of these great things had been accomplished

But how where they accomplished, Paul asks?

Two supernatural acts had been done in Galatia

**A. God had imparted the Holy Spirit to the believers**

***“He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit”***

**1. Acts 2** and the Day of Pentecost

**2. Acts 10** and Cornelius

The verb ***“ministereth”*** shows that the Galatians received the person of the Holy Spirit

… and all of the gifts and blessings connected with the Spirit, during Paul's ministry

The word was used of a *benefactor*

Thus there was nothing more of the Spirit that the Galatians could get through the Legalist

In fact, the false teachers had contributed nothing that was spiritual or miraculous

**B. He had performed miracles in their midst**

***“and worketh miracles among you”***

The historical background, recorded in the Book of Acts, again provides the answer to this final question

When Paul and Barnabas were at Iconium in …

**Acts 14:3 – *“Long time therefore abode they speaking boldly in the Lord, which gave testimony unto the Word of His Grace, and granted signs and wonders to be done by their hands”***

Later at Lystra (**Acts 14:8-11**) Paul healed a man who had been a cripple since birth

The pagans responded to the miracle by ascribing deity to the apostles

Subsequently Paul was stoned, (**Acts 14:19, 20**)

***“supposing he had been dead”***

… Paul was raised up (supernaturally)

The Galatians were the beneficiaries of the divine operation thru Paul, authenticating him to be a genuine apostle with the true message

Paul could also say to these Churches in **II Cor. 12:12** –

***“Truly the signs of an apostle were wrought among you in all patience, in signs, and wonders, and mighty deeds”***

Those ***“mighty deeds”*** are the same as the ***“miracles”*** in **v.5**

This supernatural display was produced by the preaching of the simple gospel of justification by faith

At no time was the necessity of legal works introduced

**CONCLUSION**

Truly it was all the Power of God

Here’s the warning … that falling into False Doctrine is just as serious a sin, as any other!

**THE “PROBLEM WITH THE GALATIANS”**

**THE “PRIORITY OF FAITH”**

**THE “POWER OF THE LORD”**