



We give gifts at Christmas time, birthdays, Valentine’s Day, and several other special occasions. In fact, it has nearly gotten out-of-hand...BUT, we dare not say anything in that it might hurt somebody’s feelings.

Have you ever received a gift that keeps on giving happiness in your life?

What would happen if your loved one threw away a gift that was given in love?

What about the wedding band that was given to your spouse?

Jesus...The Gift that keeps on giving!

(Galatians 3:1-9), “O foolish Galatians, who has put the evil eye on you—you before whose very eyes Jesus Christ was placarded upon his Cross? Tell me this one thing--did you receive the Spirit by doing the works the law lays down, or because you listened and believed? Are you so senseless? After beginning your experience of God in the Spirit, are you now going to try to complete it by making it dependent upon what human nature can do? Is the tremendous experience you had all for nothing--if indeed you are going to let it go for nothing? Did he who generously gave you the Spirit, and who wrought mighty things among you, do so because you produced the deeds the law lays down or because you heard and believed., Was it not with you exactly as it was with Abraham—Abraham trusted God, and it was that which was credited to him as righteousness. So you must realize that it is those who make the venture of faith who are the sons of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that it would be by faith that God would bring the Gentiles into a right relationship with himself, and told the good news to Abraham before it happened—In you shall all nations be blessed. So, then, it is those who make that same venture of faith who are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.”

Paul uses still another argument to show that it is faith and not works of the law which puts a man right with God.

In the early Church, converts nearly always received the Holy Spirit in a visible way.

- The early chapters of Acts show that happening again and again

(Acts 8:14-17, ¹⁴ “When the apostles in Jerusalem heard that Samaria had accepted the word of God, they sent Peter and John to Samaria. ¹⁵ When they arrived, they prayed for the new believers there that they might receive the Holy Spirit, ¹⁶ because the Holy Spirit had not yet come on any of them; they had simply been baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus. ¹⁷ Then Peter and John placed their hands on them, and they received the Holy Spirit.”

(Acts 10:44), “While Peter was still speaking these words, the Holy Spirit came on all who heard the message.”

- There came to them a new surge of life and power that anyone could see.
- That experience happened to the Galatians (not because they had obeyed the regulations of the law, because at that time they had never heard of the law), but
- Because they had heard the good news of the love of God and had responded to it in an act of perfect trust.

The easiest way to grasp an idea or truth is to see it embodied in a person.

Abraham was the man whom God had specially chosen as the man who pleased him (not by doing the works of the law), it was by taking God at his word in a great act of faith.

The promise of blessedness was made to the descendants of Abraham. Paul declares that to be a true descendant of Abraham is not a matter of flesh and blood; the real descendant is the man who makes the same venture of faith that Abraham did.

Note: Simply put, it is not those who seek merit through the law who inherit the promise made to Abraham; but those of every nation who repeat his act of faith in God. It was by an act of faith that the Galatians had begun their eternal joy.

Surely they are not going to slip back into legalism--and lose their inheritance. “How foolish can a person be,” Paul says.

Paul referred to things the Galatians knew...because he had taught the principle of faith and grace. But, what in the world happened to them. The knowledge and understanding were there, but they were not using them.

“Who has bewitched you?”

Bewitched has the idea that the Galatians were under some type of spell. Paul didn't mean this literally, but their thinking was so clouded – and so unbiblical – that it seemed that some kind of spell had been cast over them.

Bewitched is as if someone has “put the evil eye on them”. The ancient Greeks were accustomed to and afraid of the idea that a spell could be cast upon them by an *evil eye*.

“The evil eye” was thought to work in the way a serpent could hypnotize its prey with its eyes. Once the victim looked into the evil eye, a spell could be cast.

Therefore, the way to overcome the evil eye was simply not to look at it.

In using this phrasing and the word picture of bewitched, Paul encouraged the Galatians to keep their eyes always and steadfastly upon Jesus.

Let me be clear, it is wonderful to have a soft, tender heart before God. But.....some people have softer heads than hearts.

Some Christian's minds are too accommodating to wrong, unbiblical ideas...This is a sign of spiritual immaturity...not thinking things through to see if they really are true or not according to the Bible.

A baby will stick anything into its mouth. They are too immature to know any better. With an adult in today's generational mess, this type of behavior would be considered “progressive populism.” Or, “scatterbrained thinking.”

Before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified: The idea behind “**clearly portrayed**” is something like “**bill boarded,**” to publicly display as in setting on a billboard. **Paul wondered how the Galatians could have missed the message because he certainly made it clear enough to them.**

When Paul left them the first time, the message of Jesus and Him crucified was like setting up posters of Jesus all over town – if you saw anything, you saw Jesus.

When we see Jesus clearly before us, we won't be deceived.

Paul confronts their departure from the principle of faith. (Verses 2 and 3)

Paul said, “I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?”

Obviously, the Galatians received the Holy Spirit through simple faith. The Holy Spirit is not a prize earned through the works of the law.

We receive the Holy Spirit by faith and not by coming under the works of the law (being circumcised).

The Galatians were deceived into thinking that spiritual growth or maturity could be achieved through the works of the flesh, instead of a continued simple faith and abiding in Jesus.

This lays out one of the fundamental differences between the principle of law and the principle of grace.

- *Under law, we are blessed and grow spiritually by earning and deserving.*
- *Under grace, we are blessed and grow spiritually by believing and receiving. God deals with you under the covenant of grace; we should not respond on the principle of law.*

A question about the past: Was it all for nothing? Verses 4 and 5

Paul asks, “Have you suffered so many things in vain? Have you had such wonderful spiritual experiences, all to no purpose?” Paul wondered if all the gifts of the Spirit they had received would amount to no lasting value because they tried to walk by law, not by faith.

Paul asks them to examine the source of the Spirit’s work. Verse 5

- ***He who supplies the Spirit to you: Who supplied the Holy Spirit? Obviously, the Spirit was given as a gift from God.***
- ***Does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?***
 - ✓ ***God supplied the Holy Spirit in response to faith.***
 - ✓ ***Miracles are wrought by faith.***

Paul could not believe the Galatians had been deceived into thinking that real spiritual riches lay in pursuing God through a works relationship.
THEY WERE THROWING THE GREATEST GIFT EVER GIVEN AWAY...FOR BONDAGE.

Abraham: an example of those justified and walking by faith. Verses 6-9

Just as Abraham “believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.” “It mattered a great deal to the apostle that God saves people by grace, not on the grounds of their human achievement, and he found Abraham an excellent example of that truth.” (Morris)

“Believed God”: *It wasn’t that Abraham believed in God (as we usually speak of believing in God). Instead, it was that Abraham **believed God.***

Those who only believe in God, in the sense that they believe He exists, are only as spiritual as demons are (James 2:19).

Martin Luther says this...“Faith in God constitutes the highest worship, the prime duty, the first obedience, and the foremost sacrifice. Without faith God forfeits His glory, wisdom, truth, and mercy in us. The first duty of man is to believe in God and to honor Him with his faith. Faith is truly the height of wisdom, the right kind of righteousness, the only real religion... Faith says to God: ‘I believe what you say.’”

That is the question of the day...Do we believe what God says in the Scriptures?

If you do...you will give Him the glory in all that you do!

Your faith has made you whole and you have your name in reserve at the Supper Table of the Lord!



