

Running the Wrong Way Galatians 3:1-5

I. Paul Questions Their Confusion (v.1)

- A. The Galatian Christians had been led astray from the truth of the Gospel.
- “While the Galatians were foolish to have fallen for such teaching, Paul acknowledges that those who taught such heresy were indeed cunning characters. They had, so to speak, cast an evil spell on the Galatians. Their teaching had the effect of mentally disarming the saints so as to convince them of doctrine which should have been seen as false.”¹
 - “They were willing victims who succumbed to the flesh-pleasing works righteousness of the Judaizers. They had been convinced that faith was not enough, that something was lacking that could be fulfilled by returning to the ceremonies and requirements of the Old Covenant.”²
- B. The Galatian Christians had been given the full revelation of Gospel, making them without excuse. (Acts 13:44–49)
- “Paul’s preaching of Jesus Christ and the Galatians’ acceptance of Him by faith was all done publicly. The believers there were witnesses to each other’s salvation by faith in Him alone. But by turning to legalism they were denying the absolute saving power of Christ and the cross by which He had paid the penalty for their sins and bought their salvation.”³

II. Paul Questions Their Conversion (v.2)

- A. Paul inquiries about the origin of their salvation.
- “This rhetorical question pointed to the time of their conversions, when they received the Holy Spirit. Thus Paul did not question their salvation but challenged them to consider whether they were saved and received the Spirit by faith or on the basis of works.”⁴
 - a. The Process of Salvation:
 1. The Spirit causes one to be born again (John 3)
 - 1) One hears the gospel message. (Rom 10:17; 1 Cor. 15:3-4)
 - 2) The Spirit “quickens” the person. (Ezk. 36:25-27; Acts 13:48)
 - 3) The hearer then exercises faith and believes. (Acts 13:48,16:14; Phil. 1:29)
 2. The Holy Spirit indwells all believers (Rom. 5:5; 1 Cor.2:12)
 3. The Holy Spirit’s presence is a permanent indwelling (John 14:16; Rom. 8:9)
 - “The Spirit cannot leave a believer without throwing that believer back into a lost, unsaved condition. Disindwelling has to mean loss of salvation, and loss of salvation

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must include disindwelling. The security of the believer and the permanent indwelling of the Spirit are inseparable doctrines.”⁵

b. Distinctions to note (Filling vs. Indwelling):

1. Unlike the filling of the Holy Spirit (Eph. 5:18), which may come and go in the lives of believers based upon one’s being yielded to the Spirit, the indwelling of the Holy Spirit remains unconditionally permanent.
 - 1) O.T. example: King Saul- His regeneration and subsequent filling are recorded in (1 Samuel 10:1-10). The filling of the Spirit departs in (1 Samuel 16:14) but not the indwelling.
 - 2) N.T. example: The disciples, who were already saved, were filled with the H.S. on the day of Pentecost. (Acts 2:1-4)
2. Filling vs. Indwelling:

What is the difference between the Spirit’s indwelling and filling?	
<u>Indwelling</u>	<u>Filling</u>
• Occurs only once	• It is a repeated experience
• Results in position	• Results in power
• Cannot be undone	• Can be lost (fleshly living)
• Occurs when we believe in Christ	• Occurs throughout the Christian life
• No prerequisite (except faith in Christ alone)	• Depends upon yieldedness to the Holy Spirit
• God does it alone	• God and the Christian do it

III. Paul Questions Their Compromise (v.3-4)

- A. The flesh cannot complete that which originates from the Holy Spirit. (v.3)
 - “The validity of good works in God’s sight depends on whose power they are done in and for whose glory. When they are done in the power of His Spirit and for His glory, they are beautiful and acceptable to Him. When they are done in the power of the flesh and for the sake of personal recognition...they are rejected by Him. Legalism is separated from true obedience by attitude. The one is a rotten smell in God’s nostrils, whereas the other is a sweet savor.”⁶
- B. Christians will face persecution but if it is based upon wrong beliefs or actions it brings no enduring benefit. [Gal. 5:2-4] (v.4)
 - “You had to struggle and endure much contention within your own spirit to get upon the ground of faith at all. Are you going to throw all that away? Is all the experience of your past life to go for nothing, and are you now going to begin on a lower...platform?”⁷

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IV. Paul Questions Their Conclusions (v.5)

- A. God does not honor works of the flesh, He honors one's faith.
- "Paul's argument is itself powerful: If a person has received eternal salvation through trust in the crucified Christ, received the fullness of the Holy Spirit the same moment he believed, and has the Father's Spirit-endowed power working within him, how could he hope to enhance that out of his own insignificant human resources by some meritorious effort?"⁸
 - The answers to all of Paul's questions are that works of the Law do not justify one in God's sight. Faith comes by hearing and hearing by the word of Christ.⁹

Points to Ponder:

1. Doctrine is important. However, any theology that advocates works that "you" must do to be right with God is wrong.
2. Faith must be personally appropriated (believed and accepted into practice) in order for one to be declared just by God (John 3:18, 8:24, 6:40).

¹ Robert L. Deffinbaugh, *The Cost of Changing Course* (Galatians 3:1-9), Accessed on August 3, 2018. <https://bible.org/seriespage/6-peter-s-capitulation-and-paul-s-correction-galatians-211-21>

² John MacArthur, *Galatians, MacArthur New Testament Commentary* (Chicago: Moody Press, 1983), 64.

³ *Ibid.*, 65.

⁴ Donald K. Campbell, "Galatians," in *The Bible Knowledge Commentary: An Exposition of the Scriptures*, ed. J. F. Walvoord and R. B. Zuck, vol. 2 (Wheaton: Victor Books, 1985), 597.

⁵ Charles Caldwell Ryrie, *Basic Theology: A Popular Systematic Guide to Understanding Biblical Truth* (Chicago, IL: Moody Press, 1999), 356.

⁶ MacArthur, *Commentary*, 68.

⁷ Charles Spurgeon, *Galatians*, ed. Elliot Ritzema, *Spurgeon Commentary Series* (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2013), Ga 3:4.

⁸ MacArthur, *Commentary*, 69.

⁹ Steve Lawson, *You Foolish Galatians*. Accessed on August 4, 2018. <https://www.sermonaudio.com/saplayer/playpopup.asp?SID=103009837491>

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