

## Galatians, Chapter Three, Lesson One

HEARING WITH FAITH Galatians 3:1-7

### STIMULATE

\*\* Over the past week, did anyone find it easier to be "Advocating Christ" each day as you patterned your life after the apostle Paul? How does the "it is no longer I who live" principle better equip you for sharing the gospel by your lifestyle?

By not focusing on myself or my felt needs, I am available all the more to be at the Lord's dispatch when He brings a witnessing opportunity across my path.

### MOTIVATE

\*\* As the apostle Paul continues his argument for salvation by grace through faith, he is going to paint a beautiful portrait of how true faith impacts the life of a believer. Over the next four studies together we will learn from Paul that Christians are the ones who are...

*HEARING WITH FAITH* - Galatians 3:1-7

*HOLY BY FAITH* - Galatians 3:8-14

*HAPPY IN FAITH* - Galatians 3:15-22

*HEIRS THROUGH FAITH* - Galatians 3:23-29

\*\* For today, how important is it that Christians know and remember what they believe? What is the danger of growing careless, lazy or indifferent toward the Word of God? For the answer, please join me once again in Paul's letter to the Galatians, chapter 3, vs. 1-7.

Read Passage (V.1-4) (V.5-7)

Opening Prayer

### *Hearing with Faith*

### INVESTIGATE

**V. 1** \*\* As he opens our passage for today, is Paul trying to insult the Galatians?

No, the word he uses for "foolish" [anoetos] means "not understanding". Used only six times in the New Testament, this word does not connote mental deficiency but mental laziness and carelessness. Paul is rightfully astonished by what the Galatians had done.

\*\* What does Paul mean by saying the Galatians had been "bewitched"?

The term comes from a root word meaning "slandorous or to slander" and is used only here to say that they had been charmed or fascinated in a misleading way.

\*\* So, what is the answer to Paul's question? Who had been bewitching them?

The Judaizers, remember? According to Acts 15:1 they were teaching that "unless you are circumcised according to the custom of Moses, you cannot be saved".

**\*\* Why do you suppose Paul was so astonished by how easily the Galatians were being led astray? What had happened in their life that should have equipped them to withstand this false legalistic teaching?**

"...before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified..." The gospel had been publicly portrayed before them!

**\*\* What does Paul mean by "portrayed"?**

Lit: "to write before". The gospel had been so vividly presented to them that they could see and clearly understand the truth of Christ's crucifixion and the impact it had upon their sin.

**V. 2 \*\* How does Paul draw them out of their confusing, theological fog and into the clarity of the truth?**

By making them recall how they were saved!

**\*\* Have you ever noticed that when things are going wrong or you do not understand what is happening in your life, that simply being reminded of God's truth can set you back on course again?**

The apostle Peter clearly understood that principle and used it as a basis for his second letter.  
All see - 2Peter 1:12-13, 3:1-2

**\*\* Well, back in Galatians 3:2 what is the obvious answer to Paul's rhetorical question?**

They had received the Spirit, or become saved, by "Hearing with Faith".

**\*\* Does everyone who "hears" the gospel become saved?**

Tragically, no! The natural (or unsaved) man does not understand the things of God.  
cf. 1Corinthians 2:14

**\*\* Then from where do we get the "faith" which enables us to hear God's truth so as to be saved?**

It (faith) is a gift from God Himself! cf. Ephesians 2:8

**V. 3 \*\* Now that Paul has gotten their attention, what argument does he use?**

"Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" He is saying, "How can you perfect what the Holy Spirit began, that is impossible!"  
cf. Philippians 1:6, 2:13, Colossians 2:9-10

**V. 4 \*\* What would be the outcome of all that the Galatians had been through if they were to embrace the "different gospel" of the Judaizers?**

All of their "suffering" would have been in vain. While the believers in the Southern Galatian area did suffer for Christ (Acts 14:2), that is not what Paul is saying. The verb "to suffer" is neutral and literally means to experience. It can be referring to either good or bad, favorable or unfavorable experiences. The Amplified New Testament translates this verse this way; "Have you suffered so many things and experienced so much all for nothing - to no purpose?"

**\*\* What are some of the things that the Galatians had experienced?**

- 1) Christ publicly portrayed as crucified (V.1)
- 2) Receiving the Holy Spirit through faith (V.2)
- 3) Being "begun by the Spirit" in their walk(V.3)
- 4) Being "perfected" by the Spirit (V.3)

\*\* Why would all of that be in vain?

If they were willing to give it up and depend on their ability to reach God by keeping the Law, it would make all of the Spirit's work in their life equal zero or vanity.

\*\* How does Paul soften his tone with the Galatians?

"...if indeed it was in vain." Maybe it wasn't!

**V. 5** \*\* What two works of God does Paul now address?

1) "...provides you with the Spirit..."  
cf. Luke 11:13, John 16:13, Acts 1:4-5

2) "...works miracles among you..."  
cf. 1Corinthians 2:4-5, 2Corinthians 12:9-10, Ephesians 3:20-21

\*\* How does God choose to make us aware of these mighty works of His, by us keeping His Law?

No, but rather by our "Hearing with Faith"! God does not save us, give us His Spirit, perform mighty miracles or make us into new creatures because we keep the Law - but because we have heard with saving faith. cf. Romans 10:17, Matthew 11:15 and John 8:42-47 (Jesus speaking to legalistic Jews)

**V. 6** \*\* Seeing that some people do not effectually hear the Word of God, who does Paul now give as an example of "Hearing with Faith"?

Abraham, the father of all who would believe in God through Jesus Christ, Jew and Gentile alike! Join me in Paul's letter to the Romans, chapter four and we will see Paul's expanded explanation of why Abraham is used as an example. Read Romans 4:1-12

V. 3 - Taken from Genesis 15:5-6 (as is Gal.3:6)

V. 7 - From Psalm 32:1

V. 8 - From Psalm 32:2

V. 9 - Note: Abraham was not circumcised until Genesis 17:24, 23 years after Genesis 15:6.

V.11 - He received circumcision as a seal of the righteousness reckoned to him by faith.

\*\* Now, back in Galatians 3:6, what does it mean that his faith was "reckoned to him as righteousness"?

Literally:

Hebrew [chashab] - To think, to account

Greek [logizomai] - To reckon, to consider

"To consider, account or put towards someone's account". Abraham's faith was responded to by God, in that God gave him righteousness.

**V. 7** \*\* How do we know that Paul is about to make his point?

Because he begins this verse with "therefore", a one word statement introducing his conclusion.

\*\* What is Paul's point?

Since God-given faith is what matters, keeping the Law and circumcision become useless for becoming a son "of Abraham", which is analogous to obtaining salvation.

\*\* Should we have any doubt or waver in believing what Paul is saying about how someone can be saved?

No! He encourages us to "..be sure.." or literally "know" with certainty.

\*\* How does Paul describe the sons of Abraham?

"...those who are of faith..."

\*\* How do you suppose the Judaizers would react to that statement in the light of their heavy dependency on their blood line connection to Abraham (John 8:33,39)?

They thought this was all too easy and therefore invalid! Yet, everything Paul was saying was in perfect agreement with Romans 4:1-12 and Genesis 15:6.

\*\* Is this some new concept for someone who is saved, being called a son of Abraham?

Absolutely not! Jesus, Himself, taught the same thing (Luke 19:1-9), as well as the teachings of John the Baptist (Matthew 3:7-9).

\*\* Based upon Galatians 3:7, how would you describe someone who is saved?

We have become the sons of Abraham, the father of all who put their faith in God for their salvation, because we believe what God has said regarding the gospel and put no confidence in our flesh.

## **EXTRICATE**

\*\* How important is it for Christians to know and remember what they believe?

It is critical! We must be prepared to stand for His truth, even when it is under the attack of false teachers. We should be constantly reminding each other to stand firm on the integrity of God's holy word.

## **DELINEATE**

\*\* What is the danger of growing careless, lazy or indifferent toward the Word of God?

We, too, could become "bewitched". It is all too common that in today's world Christians are charmed or fascinated into being misled away from God's wonderful truth.

\*\* What was the error of the Galatians, what had they forgotten in the laziness of their theology?

That before their own eyes "Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified", they had seen the miraculous power of God's saving gospel. (V.1)

\*\* How did that error manifest itself in their lives?

1) Some of them had forgotten how they were saved in the first place. (V.2)

2) Some of them thought they perfected themselves in the power of their own flesh. (V.3)

## **EVALUATE**

\*\* What can I do to keep my mind established on God's truth and not be subject to every wind of doctrine that the world offers against the knowledge of God?

1) 1Peter 1:13 - "...gird your minds for action, keep sober in spirit, fix your hope completely on the grace to be brought to you at the revelation of Jesus Christ."

2) 1Peter 5:8-9 - "Be of sober spirit, be on the alert. Your adversary, the devil, prowls about like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. But resist him, firm in your faith, knowing that the same experiences of suffering are being accomplished by your brethren who are in the world."

## **ACTIVATE**

\*\* Let's thank the Lord for giving us the ability to be "Hearing with Faith" all that He has for us in His word and to help us remain clear headed enough to stand strong in our faith in Him!

Closing Prayer