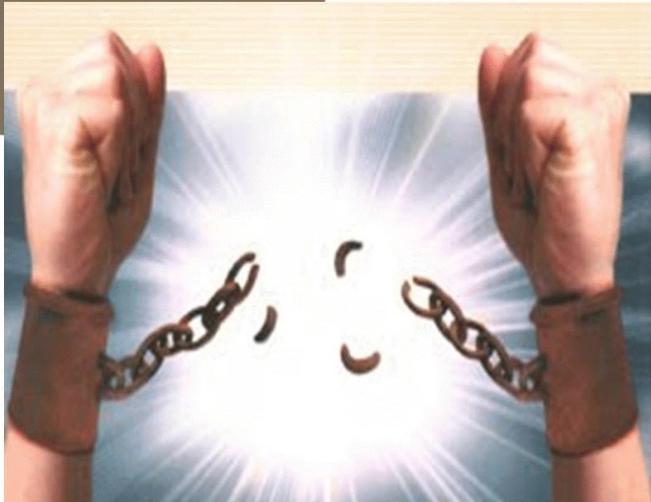


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ALIVE IN CHRIST

A Daily Devotional Study Guide

The Letter to the
GALATIANS

WEEK 5

Day 1

Study: Galatians 3:1-9

Reading: Romans 4:1-8, 10:11-21

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

Several years ago I was looking for sources of extra income and I decided to start buying and selling computers. I found an auction web sight that was selling computers much cheaper than other web sights. I bid on a couple of computers and won a few auctions. When it came time for payment, they wanted me to wire them the money directly to their bank accounts. I was almost foolish enough to do this until I started doing a little research. The people who posted the computers for sale said that they were from the US, but when it came time to send the money, they wanted me to wire it to a bank account in a foreign country. When I emailed them about the discrepancies, one of them told me that he was a US citizen but was working overseas at the time. I wanted to make sure that this was legitimate, and, as I researched, I found out that it was all a scam.

Today, we are going to see that fools just believe what they hear or see on the surface, but wise men seek to know the truth.

What Does the Bible Say?

The problem of legalism was no minor issue in the Galatian church. Paul knew that it was extremely important to take care of the problem or the church would die. In the beginning of chapter three he called the Galatians foolish. By this he meant that they had become spiritually lazy and just decided to believe what they had heard from the false teachers rather than searching the matter out for themselves. Paul also asked the Galatians who had “bewitched” them. By this statement he wanted to know why they had let the false teachers come in and trick them into believing something that was not true. They had heard the true Gospel from Paul and it has changed their lives, yet now they were believing a lie (vs 1).

Paul asked a question to get the Galatians to think about what they were doing. He asked them if they were saved by faith or by keeping the

law? The answer to the question was obvious because they had accepted Christ by faith. He then asked them why they thought they had to keep the law if they were saved by faith in the first place (vs 2-3). After their conversion, the Galatians had suffered persecution and hardships for the cause of Christ. He asked them if they went through all their suffering for nothing (vs 4). Paul also asked them if the Holy Spirit was given to them because of their faith or because of their works. Paul was not really expecting an answer to these questions because the answer was already obvious (vs 5).

Paul reminded the people that Abraham, the father of the Israelites, was saved by faith and not by works. He quoted Genesis 15:16 to them, letting them know that the Old Testament said that salvation was by faith (vs 6). The Jews were physical descendants of Abraham and claimed that the Gentiles had to follow their law to have the same eternal destiny that Abraham had, but Paul said that the real sons of Abraham were those who had faith in Jesus Christ (vs 7). Paul went on to explain how God knew from the beginning of time that He was going to save the Gentiles as well as the Jews. Because of this he prophesied that “All the nations would be blessed” through Abraham. Jesus Christ was a descendant of Abraham, and, because of His work on the cross, all men can be saved by faith in Him (vs 8-9).

How Does this Apply to Me?

If Paul were writing a letter to you would he call you a foolish Christian? If you don't study the Word of God for yourself to see if what is being preached is true, then you fit into that category. One of the major problems in churches is that some of the people who get saved never grow as they should. They rely on what they hear from others and never study things out on their own. This type of believer can cause many problems and be easily led astray because all they know is what they hear and not what they really believe. You can become a wise Christian by studying the Word of God for yourself.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * *Thank God for giving you the ability to study His Word.*
- * *Ask God to help give you the discipline to spend time with Him.*
- * *Praise God because He offers salvation to all men.*

Day 2

Study: Galatians 3:11-14

Reading: I John 5:1-20

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

When I was a youth leader, I took a group of our teenagers to Mexico. Before we went on the trip, the parents had to fill out some forms and get a notarized seal on their forms. This meant that they had to find someone with a seal that could be stamped on their form to make it an official government document. Any teen who didn't have their form notarized would not be able to go on the trip. The notarization was an official seal that provided proof that the parent's signature was legal.

Today, we are going to see that God's promise makes things official. When He makes a promise, He never breaks it. He seals His promise by giving us the Holy Spirit.

What Does the Bible Say?

Deuteronomy 27:26 tells us that everyone who doesn't keep the law is cursed. The Judaizers taught that a person could be justified by keeping the law, but Paul pointed out that the opposite was true. If a person fails to keep the law in one area, he is cursed and is bound for hell (vs 10). The only way that a person can be justified is by faith in God and His Son, Jesus Christ (vs 11). The word “justified” is a judicial term that means that God has chosen to pardon the sin of those who have believed in Jesus Christ. It also means that He looks at those He justified as righteous men whose penalty for sin has been paid.

Some people in Paul's day said that a person needs to have faith and keep the law in order to be saved. Many religions hold to this view today. Paul clearly teaches that faith and works are at the opposite ends of the spectrum when it comes to salvation. If a person wants to be saved by keeping the law, they will always fall short because humans are sinful creatures (vs 12).

Because of Jesus, no man has to face the curse of the law. Christ has redeemed (paid the price) for our sins. He took upon his body the sins

and the suffering of the whole world so that no man would have to suffer for their sins. Paul quoted Deuteronomy 21:23 to remind his readers that Jesus was cursed and took upon Him our punishment (vs 13). Because of the work of Christ, all men can trust Jesus to be their Savior and receive the Holy Spirit and eternal life with God (vs 14).

How Does this Apply to Me?

Have you ever doubted your salvation? There are a few different reasons people doubt their salvation. One reason a person doubts is because they have never been saved. This is often the case of a person who has grown up in a Christian home and prayed a prayer to accept Christ for a reason other than the conviction of God. I have known several people who thought they accepted Christ at an early age, but weren't fully sure what they were doing. Another reason people doubt is because they have sin in their lives. Many people get the idea that God rejects them because of their sin, even after they are saved. God loves us in spite of our sin and chose to save us from our sin. Because we sin, we doubt God's promise of eternal life. We change, but God's promises don't change. The next time you doubt your salvation, remember that it is Christ's work on the cross and not your work that saved you. It is Christ's work that keeps you saved, not your works. Trust that He had the power to save you and He will keep you as His child. If you are trusting in an action that you did at some time or point in your life, you may not truly be a believer. No action or work you can do will save you. Salvation is by grace through faith.

Suggestions for Prayer

- * Thank God for your eternal salvation.
- * Ask God to help you trust in His promises.
- * Praise God because He always keeps His Word.

Thought for the day

Day 3

Study: Galatians 3:1-4

Reading: 1 Corinthians 2:1-5, Ephesians 1:11-14

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

Why did Paul call the Galatians "foolish" (ESV - vs 1)?

****From the context, we see that the Galatians had received Jesus by faith, but they were trying to earn favor with God by their works.*

Why had Paul taken time to emphasize and paint the picture of Jesus Christ being crucified (vs 1)?

What was the answer they would have given to Paul's question in verse 2?

What was he trying to get them to think about?

How did they begin their spiritual journey? How were they trying to live their spiritual lives (vs 3)?

Why do you think the Galatians were falling into this trap?

What do you think Paul meant by the question he asked in verse 4?

****Some translations translate the word as "suffer." Others translate it as "experience." Paul was wanting them to look at their lives and evaluate what they had experienced as a follower of Christ. This would include suffering and blessings. These experiences were faith experiences. They were experienced apart from the law and Paul was reminding them of how they had received Christ and experienced Him when they were first saved.*

1 Corinthians 2:1-5

What did Paul not use when he declared the gospel (vs 1)?

Why do you think he was stating this?

What was the main emphasis of the message of Paul to the Corinthians (vs 2)?

How did Paul explain his physical presence among them (vs 3-4)?

****Paul didn't go to the Corinthians as a charismatic leader who swayed them with his physical abilities or powerful speeches.*

What did Paul rely on (vs 4)?

Why was preaching Christ crucified so important (vs 5)?

Why do you think this is still important for the church to do today?

Ephesians 1:11-14

How have we been given an inheritance (vs 11)? - See verses 3-10

According to verse 11, how can you see that God did not choose you based on your good deeds?

What is one of the reasons that salvation does not come from good works (vs 12)?

****If you had the ability to save yourself by your works, you would be the one who would deserve the credit.*

How does salvation come (vs 13)?

What does it mean that believers are sealed with the Holy Spirit (vs 13)?

How is the Holy Spirit a down payment of our eternal life to come (vs 14)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my daily life?

Day 4

Study: Galatians 3:5-6

Reading: Genesis 15:1-6, Romans 4:1-5

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

What did Paul's question in verse 5 imply?

Who did Paul reference in verse 6? What point was he trying to prove?

Why did Paul use the example of Abraham?

****Abraham was the father of the Jewish nation. They were descendants of him and highly revered him and his life. Paul was wanting the Galatians to see that even the first Jew was saved by faith alone and not by his works.*

Genesis 15:1-6

How did God describe himself to Abraham (vs 1)?

What do you think God meant by this?

How can God be the same to you?

Why did Abraham have a hard time believing God (vs 2-3)?

What assurance did God make to Abraham (vs 4)?

How did God confirm this promise to Abraham (vs 5)?

What does verse 6 declare about Abraham's faith?

Romans 4:1-15

What did Paul say about the faith and works of Abraham (vs 1-2)?

What did Paul say Scripture declared (vs 3)?

What does a person get for his works (vs 4)?

What does a person receive for his faith (vs 5)?

What other Old Testament proof of salvation by faith does Paul use (vs 6-8)?

Why is the emphasis placed on the covering or forgiveness of sins?

Why do you think Paul asked the question he did in verse 9?

What powerful argument does Paul use in verse 10?

What was circumcision for (vs 11)?

****Ephesians 1 tells us that we have received the Holy Spirit as the seal of our salvation.*

Why did Paul say God specifically counted Abraham's faith as righteousness before he was circumcised (vs 11)?

Who is Abraham now the father of (vs 12)?

How did the promise to Abraham come (vs 13)?

What does the keeping of the law do to faith (vs 14)?

What does the law bring (vs 15)? What do you think this means?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my daily life?

Day 5

Study: Galatians 3:7-9

Reading: Genesis 12:1-3, Romans 4:16-25

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

Who are the true sons of Abraham (vs 7)?

Why would this be significant when speaking to many who were both Jews and Gentiles?

****It sometimes can get a little confusing when you are talking about Jews. There is a Jewish nationality and a Jewish religion. In Bible days, most people who were Jews by nationality believed they were children of God because they were born into the Jewish nation. Physical birth has never guaranteed spiritual birth. The Old Testament, Gospels and Epistles all emphasize the fact that children of God are not born as children of God. They become children of God through faith.*

What did the Scripture foresee (vs 8)?

What was declared to Abraham about the conversion of the Gentiles (vs 8b)?

Who is it that is blessed with salvation (vs 9)?

How is Abraham described (vs 9b)?

Why do you think there was such an emphasis placed on Abraham?

Genesis 12:1-3

What did God call Abraham to do (vs 1)?

What did God promise Abraham (vs 2)?

What was God going to do to those who blessed and cursed Abraham and his descendants (vs 3a)?

How was God going to use Abraham and his children to bless the whole earth (vs 3b)?

Romans 4:16-25

What does salvation depend on (vs 16)? Why?

How was Abraham the “father of many nations” even though his descendants are all Jews (vs 17)?

What does God do (vs 17b)? How is this a great picture of salvation?

How is “hope” part of salvation (vs 18)?

****Hope is not wishful thinking, but by faith we have great hope for the future.*

Why did it take faith for Abraham to believe the promise of God (vs 19)?

What do verses 20-21 declare about the faith of Abraham?

Why was his faith counted as righteousness (vs 22)?

****Abraham believed that God was able to do it. It was impossible for Abraham and Sarah to have a child because of their age. Salvation is impossible for people to obtain on their own because we are dead in our sin.*

Why did Paul say this was recorded in the Old Testament (vs 23-24)?

What must we believe in order to be delivered from our sin (vs 24-25)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my daily life?

Day 6

Study: Galatians 3:10-14

Reading: Genesis 12:1-3, Romans 4:16-25

Memory: Proverbs 3:8

How are those who rely on works described (vs 10a)?

How does Paul prove this point (vs 10b)?

****Paul quoted from Deuteronomy 27:26 which stated that a person must keep every law that God had given them. Those who did not keep the law would be cursed.*

What did Paul think was very evident (vs 11a)?

What did Paul use as proof (vs 11b)?

How is keeping the law the opposite of faith (vs 12)?

What did Christ do for us (vs 13a)? What does this mean?

****To redeem means to “buy back; to pay the price for something”*

What is the “curse of the law?” (vs 13)? - See vs 10

What does the end of verse 13 emphasize?

How do Gentiles experience the blessings of Abraham (vs 14)?

What do believers receive (vs 14b)? How?

John 8:31-59

What did Jesus say about the truth (vs 31-32)?

How did the religious leaders describe themselves (vs 33)?

How did Jesus declare to the Jews that their Jewish heritage would not deliver them from the eternal wrath of God (vs 34-38)?

What did Jesus mean about being true children of Abraham (vs 39)?

What father was Jesus referring to in verse 41? (See vs 44)?

How would the religious leaders have acted if God was truly their Father (vs 42)?

Why didn't they believe Jesus (vs 45)?

What is the mark of a true believer (vs 47)?

What did they accuse Jesus of (vs 48)?

What did Jesus say was a requirement for eternal life (vs 51)?

Was Jesus teaching salvation by works? Explain.

****Salvation doesn't come by doing, but by believing. True belief is not just a mental agreement. True beliefs will be displayed by obedience. Jesus was attempting to get the religious leaders to understand that they were not living in obedience to God, though they thought that they were keeping God's commands.*

Why did they declare Jesus was lying (vs 52-53)?

Though the religious leaders did many religious things for God, what was their relationship with Him like (vs 55)?

What did Jesus declare about Himself (vs 58)?

Personal Application

What can I learn about God from this passage?

How can I apply what I have learned to my daily life?

Bible Memory

Proverbs 3:1 My son, do not forget my teaching, but let your heart keep my commandments, 2 for length of days and years of life and peace they will add to you. 3 Let not steadfast love and faithfulness forsake you; bind them around your neck; write them on the tablet of your heart. 4 So you will find favor and good success in the sight of God and man. 5 Trust in the LORD with all your heart, and do not lean on your own understanding. 6 In all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make straight your paths. 7 Be not wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD, and turn away from evil. 8 It will be healing to your flesh and refreshment to your bones.