

NT Reading Ephesians 6:10-18
OT Reading Genesis 15: 1-6

Psalm 19 7-11
Galatians 1 and 2 review.

Problem:

- Jews came to Galatia from the Jerusalem Church teaching works added to the Gospel.
- Paul was not a full apostle like Peter and the others.

Paul's Argument:

- Conversion Gal: 1:11-17
- Acceptance by Peter and James Gal: 2:1-10
- Practice rebuking Peter in Antioch Gal 2:11-16

Paul's Gospel:

- Galatians 1: 1-10 Paul's warning do not add or take away from the Gospel.
- Paul's rebuke to Peter shows a unifying effect of the Gospel
 - There are no tiers of Christianity, no one is holier than another as the Judaizers were teaching no matter nationality, social status, moral law, all are sinners, equally saved in Christ.

Galatians 3: 1-5

Here we see Paul is changing his focus. He is no longer focusing on the False teachers and has now turned toward the Galatians themselves. "Oh Foolish Galatians" Paul is quite disappointed and surprised that the Galatians are being deceived by these False Teachers and turning away. Paul is concerned that because of their falling away that they are making the gospel he preached to them previously of no effect. Which is why his tone in this letter is so urgent.

Oh Foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you. The Greek word he uses here is Ebaskanen, which means to give someone the evil eye, to cast a spell over, to hold someone spellbound by an irresistible power. I don't think that Paul believes that they are under any form of witchcraft. But rather it is a bit of a put down in light of their spiritual stupidity. To paraphrase, he is saying that You Galatians, are so stupid and ignorant to fall for these false teachers its as if they cast a spell on you.

There is some interesting use age of terms here that we don't hear today. One of the definitions of Ebaskanen is to give someone the evil eye. It was a common belief at the the time that curses and enchantments came through the evil eye. The mystical idea of the blinding of a persons 3rd eye. Obviously Paul is not believing in the pagan mystical idea, but rather is using this idea to prove a point that it is as if you have been blinded and are now unable to determine the truth from that which is false.

He continues the metaphor by saying , Your eyes have seen the truth clearly portrayed of Jesus Christ crucified. This isn't saying that the Galatians actually saw the crucifixion personally, but rather Paul is referring to his missionary journey when he shared the gospel of Christ with them. He clearly

portrayed Christ crucified to them, he painted a picture with his words so that they would see. In light of that, we get a better understanding of Paul's disappointment, and even anger toward the Galatians for being so dull and easily deceived. What Paul was doing here, was redirecting their thoughts to the cross and away from the Law that the Judaizers were bringing in. He was reminding them what he has previously taught about Christ crucified and risen. That salvation coming to them by faith and that Christ is the only, and all sufficient savior of the lost.

There are basically 2 major sources for Doctrinal Error. Human Ignorance, and Demonic Influence. I think here in Galatians we see a mixture of both. Paul's use of the term Ebaskenan denotes that there is more going on here than just the Galatians ignorance. One of Satan's favorite ploys is to take that which is true and skew it, or twist it to mean something else entirely. We saw that with Adam and Eve, when he told Eve if you eat of the fruit of the tree in the midst of the garden you won't die. God told you that because he knows that if you eat of it, that your eyes will be opened and you will become wise like God knowing good and evil. Satan twisted what God had told them. It seems that twisting the truth is one of Satan's favorite tools.

So we see here a combination of the Galatians being ignorant, believing these false teachers and following in their teaching. And we also see Satan's deception through these false teachers steering them away from a salvation by faith alone, through Christ alone, to a salvation of works. As we have said the last few weeks, we see this same very deception in our churches today. We have a 2 fold problem that we must combat. False teachers leading people astray, and those who ignorantly follow them. We need to be a people who are in our bibles, reading God's word, preparing our hearts and our minds to defend against false doctrine. And Also a people of prayer, setting our minds on things above. We have God's word, and the spirit indwelling in us giving us what we need to live out our lives in Christ. As we read this morning, be strong in the Lord and in the power of his might putting on the whole armor of God that you may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. We need to stand firm against all false doctrines whether it be from man's ignorance, or Satan's deception.

Paul continues on asking a quick series of questions which attacks directly at the heart of the Judaizers argument. In verse 2 Paul asks, Did you receive the spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? He puts forth this question to drive home a point. We could word it this way, when you received the spirit, did it come through the preaching of the gospel of Christ, or was your salvation through your works? This is a rhetorical question, the spirit came to the Galatians through Paul's teaching on Christ, and it is only now because of the men from Jerusalem that they are adding in works. I would hope that the Galatians would recognize this, that saving faith came to them first, through the preaching of the word apart from the actions of the law. Paul goes on with a series of follow up questions that really are just in support of this first one.

Paul in these questions brings the Galatians back to the work of Christ. In verse 2 he points to his previous time with them and his teaching and their conversion. Was it by faith, or by works?

Next he asks about their life in Christ in verse 3. Having begun in the spirit do you now think you are made perfect in the flesh?

Verse 5 He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, is it by the law? Or by Faith?

All of these questions should be easily answered and should show that the works of the law here amounts to nothing. Paul in a series of quick questions covers most of the Christian's life, conversion

by faith, a life of faith driven to please God our father, and our growing Faith and spiritual walk bringing us closer to God our Father.

Where is the law in all that? It isn't there. The implication here is that the Christian life ends, just as it began. Are you so Foolish that after you began in the spirit you are trying to be justified through your human efforts? Or in the case of the Galatians, the flesh, circumcision, by becoming a Jew, by following their traditions. Paul understands that only God can complete what God has started. Just as he says in Philippians God will complete the work that he has started in you. It isn't following the law of Moses, it isn't what you do, but rather it is God who justifies and sanctifies you.

In verse 4, Paul asks another question to the Galatians. Have you suffered so many things in vain, if indeed it was in vain. The Greek word Epathete used here for suffered, was also used for the word experience. It is possible that the Galatians had suffered some sort of persecution after Paul left, but I think it is just as likely that Paul could be referring to their spiritual experiences. These are a gentile people, who do not have a history like the Jews, pointing back to Gods covenant with them. These people, knowing nothing of God having heard the gospel and by the work of the holy spirit believed. This is always a memorable experience for the spirit gives new life and creates a new creature. Paul could very well be saying here, Have you experienced so many of these things in vain? Do you now believe that the work of the spirit is not enough? Is your previous belief by faith now worthless?

Paul then answers in verse 5 but he does so with another question. Therefore he who supplies the spirit to you and works miracles among you, does he do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? The Galatians would know of course it was by the hearing of faith, for before the Judaizers came all they had was Paul's teaching which was salvation apart from the Law. This line of questioning was designed for the purpose of pointing the Galatians to something they already knew.

I think many times we tend to do the same thing to ourselves. At first when our heart is changed, and we received the word of the gospel we rejoice in our Justification by the work of Christ. But through the influence of others in the church, or our own need to make things black and white we start setting up a list of things we need to follow for our sanctification. Yes, we should always be working toward an upward trend striving to be more Christ like in our life, but it is not that work that justifies us. Justification, and Sanctification go closely hand in hand. If you have one without the other then you have neither. I think at times we can become so focused on working out our Sanctification we focus on our works and tend to use that as a measuring stick of our faith. Then we start falling into the trap of creating different classes of Christians using our works as a measuring stick to put ourselves up on a pedestal over others. We need to be careful to not make this error. This is the same error that Jewish Christians made by holding their Traditions and Laws as a rule and guide for sanctification. Is this not the same error we see in Christianity today? Focusing on the works, creating lists of rules and requirements, or traditions to hold over the church. We must remember, that none of things actions justify us, it is only Christ, who died as a substitute in our place that we are justified. Having been justified, we are being sanctified, but we can not use our sanctification to establish our own righteousness before God or rather, we can not base our justification on our sanctification.

Just as the beginning, so is the end of the christian life. The whole christian life is by grace through faith. A new life in Christ starts with faith, continues with faith, and will be completed through faith. The Gospel of Christ is just as important for the believer as it is for the non believer for it is what drives us. We can not add to it, improve it, or make it better as the Judaizers were telling the Galatians. Our works have nothing to do with our justification. As believers we should always look to Christ for our

righteousness, not the work of the law, or covenants of traditions. Good works will naturally flow out of a person who is Justified, but they are just that...the natural effect, not the reason for our justification.

The doctrine of Justification is central to our lives and for all people. One day all of humanity will stand before the judgment seat and only those who are Justified by Christs work and substitution will enter heaven all others no matter how good, righteous, or religious they think they are, without faith in the justifying work of Christ they will be under God's wrath.

The doctrine of justification also can help us in times of doubt or discouragement. It is reassuring to know that it is not by anything that we have done, or could do to be justified. Our assurance is in Christ, his work on the cross. John 6:37 says,

“All that the father gives me will come to me and the ones who comes to me I will be no means cast out. For I have come down from heaven, not to do my own will, but the will of him who sent me. This is the will of the father who sent me, that of all he has given me I should lose nothing, but should raise it up at the last day. And this is the will of him who sent me, that everyone who sees the son and believes in him may have everlasting life and I will raise him up at the last day.”

Remembering that our justification is in Christ, and not in the law should be a great encouragement to us as we live out our Christian life.