



## Free to Change

### RECAP

**This week's focus: The Gospel that saves you is the same Gospel that transforms you.**

The Apostle Paul has shown in the second half of chapter 2 that we are saved when we stop trusting in our moral efforts or the law (we die to it) and trust in the work of Christ, which creates a whole new motivation for everything we do (we live for God).

The Gospel is the way we enter the kingdom of God. But now, Paul will illustrate in the following chapters (3-5) that the Gospel is much more than that. We are not only saved by the Gospel, but we also now grow by the Gospel. The Gospel of Jesus is not just the seed of faith, it is the greenhouse of faith. We never leave the Gospel behind and outgrow it; we dive deeper into it.

Paul reminds the Galatian Christians that the way they came to Christ was from a message that they had heard. The message was about the grace of God being poured out on them through the death and resurrection of Jesus. This Good News was not about how to live, but all about what Jesus had done for them on the cross.

The Gospel is an announcement of historical events before it is instructions on how to live. It is the proclamation of what has been done for us before it is a direction of what we must do. As this message is proclaimed, the heart is stirred by the Spirit of God. Belief is sparked in the intellect and in the heart. Belief then becomes faith when it is acted upon.

Biblical faith is believing that God will do what He said He will do and adjusting your life to Him. To "believe" the Gospel is not merely to assent to assertions about Christ (e.g., He died, He rose) but to stop trying to attain salvation by observing the law.

The Galatian church had been "bewitched" and foolishly followed a false teaching that demanded they return to a system of works-righteousness. Adding works to the Gospel led them into the demonic forces of legalism and despair.

These forces of legalism are still at work today. Instead of believing that Christ is our hope and goodness, we look to something else as our hope, to some other way to make us feel good and complete. This type of legalism is a form of self-justification that leaves us empty and bitter.

The answer is to look to the Gospel. Only then can we repent from our self-righteousness and our lack of joy in the finished work of Christ. What Jesus did on the cross was not only enough to save us, but it was also enough to sanctify us.

So, place your faith in Jesus and let His grace transform your heart. Abandon any form of self-effort to be good or righteous. For you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone. Let that old hymn be true in your heart; "On Christ, the solid Rock I stand; All other ground is sinking sand."



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### SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker Question: What is the most valuable gift you have ever noticed? What were your thoughts and/or feelings in response to such a gift?

### STUDY (about 30 min) Read Galatians 3:1-9

1. What about the reading or message on Sunday that stood out to you? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
2. Why do you think Paul uses the words "foolish" and "bewitched" in Galatians 3:1? What is he trying to communicate by using such strong language?
3. Why does Paul immediately call to the Galatians' minds to the crucifixion of Jesus (3:1), in response to the false teaching they are hearing? What is it about the cross that is so central to the teaching of justification by faith alone?
4. In Galatians 3:1-5, Paul chastises the Galatians for changing course midstream. Initially accepting God's grace as a free gift, now they are trying to earn God's favor through their actions. When you first became a follower of Jesus, what did you understand about faith and rules? How has your perspective changed?
5. Examine your motives. Why is it that you do and don't do certain things? Are you compelled by your freedom in Christ or by the desire to earn approval?
6. What difference does it make when you base your relationship with God upon how well you keep a list of rules rather than living in light of the truth that God accepts you by grace alone, through faith alone, and in Christ alone?
7. What false teachings and influences do you think are most dangerous in potentially "bewitching" the church today? How can you be sure to identify those properly and resist them?
8. How does it bring you comfort to know that peace with God requires faith alone? How can you remind yourself - and believers around you - to continue in the Christian life in the same way you began the Christian life: by faith?
9. In Galatians 3:8-9, Paul zooms out to remind the Gentile Christians that God includes them in the family of faith. How does this reality affect our awe of God, our relationships with brothers and sisters in Christ, and our urgency in evangelism?

### SUPPORT (15 min)

**Pray:** Ask God for opportunities to encourage other believers who are discouraged in their faith by recounting Christ crucified.

The power to see justification by faith alone motivates you to joyfully live for Him.