

---

---

# Sermon Notes

May 15, 2022

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

---

## Hearing With Faith Galatians 3:1-5

### Justified From Start to Finish

- ❖ “You are today’s lucky winner of...”
  - the prevalence of marketing schemes causes most of us to be wary, skeptical and cynical of almost everything
  - for some, this wariness carries over to the gospel of grace and the forgiveness of sins God offers through faith in Jesus
- ❖ Some may joyfully respond to God’s free gift of saving faith but then look for “the hidden catch” thinking they must maintain their status with God through their good works
  - this is the error Paul confronts among the Galatian churches
  - the notion that one must supplement the work of Christ with personal achievement and action in order to secure salvation
- ❖ All the glory for salvation goes to God
  - our hearts and our fleshly natures are radically opposed to this notion
  - we come pre-wired to want to justify ourselves before God
  - “there must be something I can do”

- ❖ The Biblical doctrine of justification by grace alone through faith alone in Christ alone is a doctrine that undergirds all of the Christian life from beginning to end

### Under Attack

- ❖ *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?*
  - Paul’s indignation over what is going on among the Galatian churches boils over
  - if it were possible for people to take care of their sins by themselves, then Jesus died for no purpose
- ❖ It is only out of love and deep concern for the Galatians that Paul sounds this stark wake-up call
  - not a put-down regarding intellectual ability but an assessment regarding a lack of spiritual discernment
  - **bewitched** = to give someone the evil eye, to cast a spell
  - allowing themselves to come under the influence of false teachers is a sign that some kind of demonic influence is at work
  - doctrinal errors can generally be traced to
    - human ignorance
    - demonic influence
- ❖ Christian doctrine is the battlefield where the most intense spiritual warfare takes place

### Be On Guard

- ❖ Keep your eyes on Christ and His cross!
  - not just the narrative facts about the crucifixion

- the sacrificial, substitutionary purpose behind Jesus' death
- ❖ “Does your right standing before God depend upon the work of Christ crucified or does it depend on you?”
  - we need a constant reminder that Jesus did everything necessary for salvation on Calvary's cross
  - the all-sufficient Savior offers the only all-sufficient atonement for sin
- ❖ Like the Galatians, we need to remind ourselves that we only “make it” to the end of the Christian life in the same way our new life in Christ began: by faith!

### Remember the Holy Spirit!

- ❖ The gift of the Holy Spirit is given on the basis of hearing the gospel and responding to it with faith, not by observing the law (Romans 10:17)
  - remember that the Holy Spirit is
    - a gift we receive rather than something we grab
    - a gift we are given rather than something we gain
  - the Holy Spirit's work is not a reward based on our spiritual achievement, it is a gift granted to those who believe in Christ's achievement
- ❖ The Holy Spirit leads believers, is grieved by their sin, reveals the mystery of the gospel, intercedes for, baptizes, indwells, seals, fills, and empowers Christians to live a life pleasing to God
- ❖ Paul asks his readers to consider if their new life in Christ was begun by the Holy Spirit, why they would ever consider the possibility of reaching the finish line of the Christian life on the basis of their own work or merit

- the way **into** the Christian life is also the way **on** in the Christian life
- only God can complete what God has begun
  - both justification (an act) and sanctification (a work) flow to us as an evidence of God's free grace
  - we have a personal responsibility to cooperate with the Holy Spirit as He does His sanctifying work in us
    - ♦ **but**, we never stand before God on the basis of our own righteousness
    - ♦ justification is never based on our sanctification
- ❖ Our new life in Christ begins by faith, continues by faith, will be completed by faith
  - look to the gospel every day as the basis of your righteousness before God
  - we preach Christ crucified

### Personal Application

1. In what ways do you find your fleshly nature trying to assert itself and take some of the credit/glory for your justification from God?
2. What might help you do better at keeping “Christ crucified” at the forefront of your thinking on a daily basis?
3. In what ways are you currently cooperating with the Holy Spirit as He does His sanctifying work in you?