

What Are You Doing? Gal 3:1-6

Gal 3:1-6; We're working our way through the book of Galatians (**Intro**), and finding some truths that are absolutely foundational for our lives
And the reason Paul is laying them out, is b/c the Galatians were at risk of making *shipwreck* of their faith

Remember them? That group of churches to whom he was writing, after establishing them on his first missionary journey? (**Map 13**, ESV Study Bible)

Somewhere around 46-47AD, Paul left Antioch with Barnabas, and traveled to Cyprus
Then, they went into modern day Turkey and started churches in Antioch of Pisidia, Iconium, Lystra, and Derbe; All in the region of Galatia; A Roman state at the time

And after leaving, Paul was *concerned* about them; Incredulous even; Saying in 1:6 . . .
[6] *I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting him who called you in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel*; He couldn't believe it*****
And spends the rest of the letter trying to talk them off the cliff

➤ And this passage (**Gal 3:1-6**) is the peak of his frustration; Later on he pleads with them, but here he's mad at them; V1
[1] *O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.* [2] *Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?* [3] *Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?* [4] *Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?* [5] *Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith—*[6] *just as Abraham “believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness”?*

➤ Have you ever had somebody say to you, “What are you doing?”
Not like, “Hey, what are you doing?” But, “What are you *doing*?” Like that?
It's not a question, is it? It's really a statement to say . . .
“You're an idiot; You're a fool; Totally making a mess of things; What are you doing?”

I remember my first supervisor as a trading clerk on the floor of the Chicago Board of Trade, who absolutely *loved* to say that; I can hear him now
I'd mess something up as the “new puke,” or be on the verge of it, and with all the disdain he could muster, he'd contort his face and say . . .
“What you are *doing*?” As if I was an idiot; And probably was at times
And then, to his credit, in the midst of the mayhem, he'd try to *correct* my error before
I cost us a bunch of money

That's the sense of Paul's words here in Gal 3
It's as if he's saying – “What are you *doing*?”

➤ I say that, not only b/c of his tone, but b/c of his start – *O foolish Galatians!*
Or as J.B. Phillips said it, a pastor in England during WWII who translated much of the Bible for his *students* – “O you dear idiots;” It's that strong

And then he adds – *Who has bewitched you?* As in, who put you under a spell? Not literally, but figuratively; Whose influence did you foolishly embrace?

Who changed your mind and steered you wrong? So that you now think salvation comes through faith *and* works
Who did that? And what are you doing believing it?

➤ After all, he says – *It was before your eyes* [your very own eyes] *that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.*
Now, he could be saying that some of you were actually *there* in Jerusalem 20 years before, to *witness* his death on the cross
But most likely he's saying, “I told you all about it; I painted a word picture you couldn't miss; And couldn't deny”

That's the idea of the Greek word for *portrayed*
It comes from the world of advertising in the 1st century, where they would put up a public notice to show that a property was for sale
You couldn't miss it, and couldn't misconstrue it; It was *portrayed*; Kind of like billboards portray messages in *our* day

And Paul's like, “I did that; I *portrayed* Jesus Christ and him crucified, so clear and so compelling, it was as if he died right before your eyes”
He put up a billboard of biblical proportions

And here *they* were, coloring over it with crayons; Allowing false teachers to deface it with graffiti; And Paul's like, “What are you *doing*?”

➤ If that applies directly to *you* right now, heed it; Hear it; Receive it; It may be the last time or the *only* time somebody tries to save your fr making shipwreck of your faith
If it doesn't apply, consider one man's rebuke, another man's warning; Consider this a warning; A warning to not be fooled; That's the message for *us*

Don't be fooled (v1)

You may not be standing at the edge of heresy or slipping on the slope of falsehoods, but not a single one of us is immune to it; Not a single one
Not a single one of us is exempt from being adversely influenced by well-meaning people, who get the Bible wrong; Nice people, who are 3 degrees off

Nor are we immune to *charismatic* personalities; With glittering falsehoods to go along
Or *unbelieving* people with an ax to grind
Or smooth *talkers* who tell us what we want to hear; Or compromising *leaders* who condone our lifestyle; So that our conviction is *minimized*
We're not immune; Not a single one of us

Which makes it vitally important that we're ever vigilant, so as not to be fooled; Not to be sucked in; Not to be swayed from what we know is true

And the way to do that, is to . . .

• Remember what you've heard

Referring to the gospel – Christ crucified as Paul said it; And the whole counsel of God that goes with it; If you're going to keep the faith; If you're going to . . .
Press on toward the goal for the prize of the upward call of God in Christ Jesus . . .
You have to remember what you've heard; What you've learned (Phil 3:14)

That's the implication of v1; You *heard* the gospel, it was *portrayed*, now remember it

Remember that Christ died for your sins, *completely*

And that *a person is not justified by works of the law, but through faith*; Faith in *Jesus Christ* (Gal 2:15)

And that we *have been crucified with Christ* ourselves; So that *we* no longer live, but Christ lives *in us* (Gal 2:20); And will never leave us; And always loves us

If you're going to keep from being fooled; If you're going to discern false teaching and reject it accordingly – you *have* to remember *true* teaching

You have to remember what you've heard

2nd . . .

• **Remember what you've seen**

Referring to things like changed lives; And Spirit-filled worship; Answered prayer; Bold witness; Sweet fellowship; We *have* to remember those things

Sometimes by writing them down; Sometimes by reminiscing with one another; And *often* times by calling them to mind

Otherwise, the power of the present, what's right in front of you, will overshadow the past, what you've seen, and render it moot; Making you susceptible to being fooled

Don't do that; *Remember* what you've seen; Including *Jesus*, high and lifted up in the eyes of your *heart*; And the things he's done in your *life*

Including the *needs* he's met; And the *darkness* he's dispelled; And the *light* he's revealed; And the *glory* he's shown; Remember that

Remember what you've *seen*, so as not to be fooled by what you *see*

And 3rd . . .

• **Remember what you've experienced**

If you're going to keep from being fooled at this point in your life, you have to remember what's transpired *up* to this point; What you've experienced

Referring to your *own* life change; Your *own* relief of guilt; Your *own* forgiveness; Your own fruit

Remembering what you've seen in others is one thing, remembering what you've experienced yourself, is another (**Summary**); And keeps you from being fooled

So that nobody ever has to say, "What are you doing?"

That's the first point

➤ The 2nd is this . . .

Keep your faith (v2-6)

Your faith in *Jesus*; Your belief/trust in who he is, what he's done, and what he says

That's the thrust of v2-6 – Keep your faith

Not some nebulous faith in *nothing*; Or an *unfounded* faith in somebody's ideas

But your faith in his *grace*; His work; His word; His Spirit; Keep *that* faith

That's the idea

➤ And he gets at it with 4 main questions, starting in v2

[2] *Let me ask you only this* [Paul says]: *Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?*

Did you open your heart to the life-altering presence of God by doing good *works*, or hearing the gospel with an inclination to believe? Hearing w/ faith?

The latter, right? Just like Paul says in Eph 1:13

When you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, [you] were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit; He indwelt you

The point being . . .

• **No faith, no Spirit (v2)**

That's the implication; We receive the Holy Spirit of God, by *faith*; Period; Works have nothing to do with it

We can't *earn* him by works, and we can't *keep* him by works; Only faith

No faith, no Spirit; Which means we need to keep it; Cultivate it; Grow it

In good times *and* in bad; Just like the Johnson's testified earlier

Keep your faith b/c no faith, no Spirit

2nd . . .

• **No faith, no godliness (v3)**

Apart from faith, we have no hope of godliness; That's the point of the next question; V3

Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? It's a rhetorical question to say "no;" No!

We *begin* our life in Christ by the power of the Spirit, and we *grow* in Christ by the power of the Spirit; Producing *godliness*

Our *flesh*, our human nature in all its weakness and sin, is power-*less* to bring about such change; Such holiness

Now, does that mean we sit around and do nothing? Of course not

It simply means that the things we *do*, in *no* way perfect us; In *no* way, *add* to our sanctification; Good works *show* we're being sanctified, but they don't add to it

They don't *add* to our godliness

Only the Spirit does that, through faith; So by all means, literally, keep it

3rd . . .

• **No faith, no purpose (v4)**

Keep your faith, b/c *apart* from it, you have no real *purpose* in life; V4

Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?

IOW did you give up your former way of life, and experience the reproach of Christ, the criticism that comes from being associated with him, for nothing?

Was that all for naught? Of course not

You suffered for a *reason* Paul says; Namely, that faith in *Jesus* is necessary; Necessary for salvation, necessary for life to the full, and necessary to live it with purpose

➤ And the same is true of us

We suffer the hardships of life, we endure persecution, we give of our best, and we lay down our lives – b/c faith *requires* it, and that faith gives it *purpose*

Purpose, b/c God has a plan; Purpose, b/c he's in control; Purpose, b/c he loves us and uses us to accomplish his will

Faith gives our suffering and sacrifice *purpose*; While a lack thereof, doesn't

No faith, no future; No faith, no help; No faith, no blessing; No faith, no reason

It's just all vanity; Futility; Useless; Pointless; Hollow
With nothing of any lasting *value* to *show* for our lives

It's like Solomon said, after making a *mess* of *his* (**Ecclesiastes 2:11**)

I considered all that my hands had done and the toil I had expended in doing it, and behold, all was vanity and a striving after wind, and there was nothing to be gained under the sun. No faith, no purpose*****

And then last, from v5-6 . . .

• **No faith, no miracles (v5-6)**

God won't do them, and you won't see them; V5

[5] *Does he who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you do so by works of the law, or by hearing with faith [it's faith]—[6] just as Abraham “believed God [just as he had faith], and it was counted to him as righteousness”?*

Paul reiterates the question and content of v2, and *adds* the aspect of miracles

Saying that just like the Holy *Spirit* comes to us by faith, so do miracles

We can't and don't experience *them* by doing good works, any more than we can experience the *Spirit* through good works

You say, “Pastor Rob, I haven't experienced any miracles in my life”

Really? Are you saved? That's a miracle; B/c you were *dead* in your trespasses and sins

Were you born? That's a miracle; B/c he fashioned you in the womb the Bible says

Do you live on this earth? That's a miracle; B/c God created it out of nothing

Have you seen the most unlikely people change their lives to live for Christ? That's a miracle; B/c most don't

➤ Miracles abound; But we don't see them or experience them b/c we lack the eyes of faith; Or we're so preconditioned to explain them away or *doubt* them, we don't look

All the while, God is at work; Doing miracle upon miracle according to his will

Not on demand, but according to his plan

And the key to receiving them, and seeing them, is faith – *the assurance of things hoped for, the conviction of things unseen* (Heb 11:1) No faith, no miracles (**Summary**)

➤ So make sure you *keep* it; Keep your faith; And don't be fooled by false teaching or false advertising, no matter how well-meaning the source

Remember what you've seen and heard

So that nobody ever sees *you* and says – “What are you *doing*?”

Prayer – Lord, you well know that we're prone to wander and prone to doubt; So bolster

our faith; Increase our belief; And help us stand firm no matter what

We love you, and now give to you our tithes and offerings