

Galatians defends Paul's gospel as being from Christ. Some readers may not know that Paul's Apostolic legitimacy was attacked by opponents in Galatia. They claimed that Paul was not truly an Apostle. After all, he wasn't a follower of Jesus during His earthly ministry. Furthermore, they asserted that Paul's gospel contradicted the gospel taught in Jerusalem by Peter, John, and James. In other words, the agitators said that Paul's gospel was *dependent* on the Jerusalem Apostles, but there's more: they also accused Paul of *distorting* the gospel taught by the Apostles in Jerusalem.

Galatians teaches that we are justified through faith, not by works.

Galatians is the first letter in which Paul trumpets the truth that believers are justified not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus Christ. His opponents insisted that one must keep the law and be circumcised to obtain salvation (Gal. 5:2-4; 6:12-13; see also Gen. 17:9-14; Acts 15:1-5). What these adversaries did not understand was that the new covenant had dawned with the death and the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Believers were no longer under the stipulations of the Mosaic covenant, including circumcision. Of course, believers were always saved by faith, as Paul points out using the example of Abraham (Gal. 3:6-9). Now that the Messiah has come, it is clear that one is saved not by the works of the law but through faith in Jesus. The good news is that we are justified—that is, declared to be in the right before God—not by achieving but believing, not by performing but by resting in God's grace in Jesus Christ.

Galatians highlights Spirit-led obedience. Paul also emphasizes the importance of obedience in Galatians. Such obedience is not the basis of our justification or of our right relationship to God. The only basis of these things for believers is the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, who forgives us of our sins and whose righteousness is imputed to us. It would be a mistake, however, to conclude from this that obedience is inconsequential. The new life of believers, however, is not self-generated, nor does it contradict the gospel of grace. Believers need supernatural power, and that power comes from the Holy Spirit. Thus, Paul exhorts believers to walk in the Spirit (Gal.5:16), to be governed and directed by the Spirit (Gal.5:18) to produce the fruit that comes from the Spirit (Gal.5:22-23), to march in step with the Spirit (Gal.5:25), and to sow to the Spirit (Gal.6:8).

Today's Message: Devoted to the Right Gospel
Introduction to Galatians
March 22, 2026
Pastor Kent Hinkel

"So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed." – John 8:36

"So Christ has truly set us free. Now make sure that you stay free, and don't get tied up again in slavery to the law."
– Galatians 5:1

Every believer's challenge: _____

Listening with Your Heart

"This letter is from Paul, an apostle. I was not appointed by any group of people or any human authority, but by Jesus Christ himself and by God the Father, who raised Jesus from the dead."
– Galatians 1:1