

The Regressive Tendency

Galatians Series

- Background

- Setting

- *issue today – clear up what you really believe

 - actions not in line with stated convictions

 - stakes are huge – critical to resolve

- need to unpack the faith vs. Works debate

- need them to have a clear theology that is lived out

¹ “You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? Before your very eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed as crucified. ² I would like to learn just one thing from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by believing what you heard? ³ Are you so foolish? After beginning by means of the Spirit, are you now trying to finish by means of the flesh? ⁴ Have you experienced so much in vain—if it really was in vain? ⁵ So again I ask, does God give you his Spirit and work miracles among you by the works of the law, or by your believing what you heard? ⁶ So also Abraham “believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness.”

1. Who Tricked You?

- 'foolish' – unreflective, lacking discernment, thoughtless
- hard words that *offend* and grab your attention

a) Truth of the Cross Yours

- 'before you very eyes', 'clearly portrayed'
- clear we are lost – Rom. 3:23
- clear we were undeserving – Rom. 5:6
- clear that Jesus died in Your place – John 3:16
- clear that I no longer live – Christ lives in me – Gal 2:20
- how then have you been tricked into thinking you need to add to this work by embracing traditions and legalism?

2. Answer Me This.....?

- did working hard enough bring you the Holy Spirit?
- did you achieve 'righteousness' and become deserving?

a) Your Story Gives Evidence to the Truth

- when you believed what you heard
- responded to truth, received the Holy Spirit of God
- something you surrendered to and embraced

3. You Can't Be This Dumb!!!

- 'are you so foolish?'

a) Start out one way – Finish another?

- you started God's spirit brought truth to your heart

- overjoyed at the grace, the gift, the work of almighty God

- now saying – I got it, take it from here?

- flesh – human effort, self reliance

- Holy Spirit

- convicts of sin - John 16:8

- regenerates us – John 3:6-8

- indwells us – John 14:17

- seals us – Eph. 1:13

- fills us – Eph 5:18

* all without our help, only our surrender and participation

- are you really trying to finish by means of self effort or works?

4. You Giving Up Now?

- after all the persecution and sacrifice – you willing to give up?

- in vain – if you can earn or deserve it, if you can work for it and qualify with your effort – all this would have been in vain

- stand strong in the face of opposition and those that might impose legalism

5. Who Did the Work?

- ask again, after encountering almighty God, seeing miracles..
- was it really:
 - you did certain things and God was obligated to do this?
 - because you had great intentions, did your best?
 - because you kept a list of rules and regulations?
- or was it:
 - God in His love and grace chose to provide a way for you to be reconciled to him, and receive the indwelling Holy Spirit, all because you responded to what He has already done!

So What

1. Have We Been Deceived?
 - fine sounding arguments, poorly used texts
 - are we clear about Jesus Crucified and our response
2. Remember The truth
 - you accept this by faith – belief then becomes action
 - motivated by love and dedication
3. Have You Grabbed the Wheel of Your Life?
 - are you trying to live by self effort or Holy Spirit empowered?

4. Don't Give Up

- some conflict is worth having
- don't invalidate history and sacrifice with surrender

5. Remember Who Does the Work

- the work of God, wonder of God, spirit of God – gift
- we cannot obligate God to do for us
- all of that comes from belief and embrace – allowing him to lead and work

“²⁰ I have been crucified with Christ and I no longer live, but Christ lives in me. The life I now live in the body, I live by faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave himself for me.”