

**Bewitched by False Doctrine**

Scripture: Galatians 3:1–5

Code: 48-11

Let's open our Bibles then to Galatians chapter 3, if you will, Galatians chapter 3. Again, as always, we hear from the Lord. We let the Lord speak through His Word. And that's exactly what the Bible is; it is the Word of God. Every word is true; every word is pure. This is the only direct, written revelation we have from God. It's all contained within sixty-six books of the Bible: thirty-nine in the Old Testament, twenty-seven in the New. This is the revelation of God. No one is to take away anything from it or add anything to it, or "it will be added to them the plagues that are written in it."

This is the revelation from heaven for us. And so because it has no equal, because it rises above all other things in this world, because it is in itself heavenly, it is always our responsibility to come to this revelation and to understand the glorious message that it reveals. So every Sunday when we meet, and even during the weeks as we meet together in various other formats, the Word of God, the Bible, is always the focus of our interest, our study, and our attention.

We are going through the book of Galatians. Galatia was a region in the Mediterranean area in the time of our Lord and the apostles. It was a region that had been brought under the power of the Romans. And in that region there were a number of cities in which Paul had planted churches. He writes back to this region of Galatia this letter to be distributed to all the churches and read to all the believers in Galatia.

What caused him to write this letter is false teachers had come into that area, and apparently gone from church to church proclaiming a false gospel. Paul is profoundly exercised over this. This is very early in his ministry, very early in his writings. He knows immediately, even though the churches are truly established, they are genuine believers, and they have had the influence of this great apostle - they are subject to false teaching. They will be assaulted, they will be attacked, and in some cases, they will fall victim to false teachers. And that is exactly what happened in Galatia.

So Paul writes this letter to deal with what's going on in these Galatian churches. In the first two chapters, he defends his apostolic authority as the one called by Christ, taught by Christ, and sent by Christ. So he is the one they are to listen to, and not the false teachers who come from the kingdom of darkness, even though they profess to be Christians.

So the first two chapters deal with his apostolic authority. And then in chapters 3 and 4 he clarifies the truth of the gospel. That's where we are now in chapters 3 and 4. He goes to the very careful, thoughtful defense of the true gospel of grace alone.

Now what the false teachers basically were saying was: grace was not enough, the cross is not enough, the Holy Spirit is not enough. "What God has wrought among you is not enough. You cannot enter the kingdom of God, you cannot enter heaven unless you are circumcised and adhere to the

law of Moses.”

This was a convoluted, adulterated, corrupted gospel. They were adding works to grace and works to faith. Paul is so exercised about this that there is not at the beginning of this letter any commendation. He launches immediately into the shock that he is feeling over their defection; chapter 1, verse 6: “I am amazed that you are so quickly deserting Him who called you by the grace of Christ, for a different gospel; which is really not another; only there are some who are disturbing you and want to distort the gospel of Christ. But even if we, or an angel from heaven, should preach to you a gospel contrary to what we have preached to you, he is to be accursed! As we have said before, so I say again now, if any man is preaching to you a gospel contrary to what you received, he is to be accursed!” That’s really how he begins the letter, pronouncing a curse, damnation, *anathema*, on anyone who preaches a false gospel.

It is shocking to Paul that the Galatians have fallen victim to this. Now that leads us to chapter 3 where he specifically, having already established his apostolic authority and the right to say what he says as a true representative of God, he now gives them a defense of the gospel of grace and faith, and it runs through chapters 3 and 4. Let me read the opening five verses of chapter 3.

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so foolish? Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh? Did you suffer” – or better, “experience” – “so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain? So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

This is a powerful portion of Scripture. It is powerful because Paul embraces the Trinity – the Son, the Spirit, and the Father – and essentially says, “By foolishly being bewitched by a false gospel, or a false addition to the gospel, you have called into question the work of the Son and the Spirit and the Father.” In other words, “You have assaulted heaven at its heights.” This is an all-out attack on the Triune God.

Now the word that jumps off the page probably initially is in verse 1, and it’s the word “bewitched.” You won’t find that word anywhere else in the Bible. This is the only place it is used. Is Paul saying that these Galatian believers were bewitched? Absolutely. Which then raises the question: Can a true Christian be bewitched? Can a genuine believer be bewitched, a son of God, child of the Father, a soul in Christ, one who possesses the Holy Spirit, one who has been regenerated?

Can believers become bewitched? Aren’t we the people of the truth? Isn’t it a fact that we believe the truth, love the truth, embrace the truth, proclaim the truth, that we reject error? Isn’t it true that we have the Word of God, and we have an understanding of the Word, we have an anointing from God, the Holy Spirit teaches us all things? Aren’t we the people of the truth? Aren’t we the ones who know truth and reject error? How is it possible for true believers to become bewitched?

Well, the fact of the matter is, many in the churches in Galatia, true believers, were bewitched. We know they were true believers. Look at chapter 3, verse 26: “For you are all sons of God through faith in Christ Jesus. And all of you who were immersed into Christ spiritually have clothed yourself with Christ.” And verse 29: “Since you belong to Christ, you are Abraham’s descendants, heirs according

to promise.”

There’s never a question in this letter about the spiritual condition of the Galatians; they are believers. Initially when the apostle Paul came, they received the gospel that he preached, they fully embraced it. Now they have become bewitched: true believers bewitched.

He says to them, in verse 3 I just read, that, “You’ve begun by the Spirit.” That’s true regeneration. That’s the work of the Spirit, the work of regeneration. First, the work of conviction; then the work of granting new life, regeneration, new birth. “You began with the new birth. You began in the power of the Spirit. Are you now being perfected by the flesh? Are you so bewitched as to think the work of the Spirit was incomplete?”

In chapter 4 and verse 9, he says, “Now that you have come to know God, or rather to be known *by* God, how is it that you turn back again to the weak and worthless elemental things, to which you desire to be enslaved all over again? Why are you being bewitched and going back to a system of rules and ceremonies and rituals?”

The Judaizers had said, “Salvation is in Christ, salvation is by grace and by faith, but also by works. You must be circumcised as prescribed in the law of Moses. You must maintain the Mosaic ceremonies and laws.” Salvation then to the bewitchers was by grace and works.

And that’s always the bewitching lie that plagues the church and true believers. Twice Paul says, “You are foolish,” verse 1 and verse 3. “You foolish Galatians”; verse 3: “Are you so foolish?” It is foolish to be bewitched by the false additions to the gospel.

Maybe you never thought about the fact that believers, true believers, can be bewitched. But every warning in the New Testament, every warning about false teachers and false doctrine is an assumption that believers can be bewitched. Every command to hold to the truth, guard the truth, rightly handle the word of truth is also based on the assumption of our susceptibility to bewitching. Yes, believers can be seduced into believing lies about the gospel.

Now the bewitching doesn’t come when someone says, “I don’t believe in God, and I don’t believe in the Bible. I don’t believe in Christ. I don’t believe in the gospel of grace. I don’t believe in the cross. I don’t believe in the resurrection.” That’s not bewitching; that’s not seductive - that’s obvious to us. The bewitching comes from those who acknowledge the gospel, accept the gospel, and then add works to the gospel.

The apostle Paul anticipated this in the twentieth chapter of Acts when he pulled the Ephesian elders together and said, “After I’m gone, perverse men are going to rise up among you to lead you astray; and wolves are going to come from the outside to do the same thing. You’re going to get hit from the inside and hit from the outside, because Satan is always, always assaulting the church with deception.”

John says in his epistle, “I have no greater joy than to see my children walking in the truth.” John says, “If anybody comes and says anything else, reject that person. Don’t let him in your house. Don’t participate with him at all.” We are warned again and again. And even to contend earnestly for, the once for all delivered to the saints, faith. It’s a battle.

All those warnings, all those commands to faithfulness assume that we can become bewitched. And I would just go so far as to say, most churches in our society are bewitched. Most church leaders are bewitched. At the core, they may believe the true gospel, but they have allowed so many things to be added to the gospel or to corrupt the gospel that they are bewitched.

This isn't just a problem in the pew. It is a problem in the pew, because it's a problem in the pulpit. All too common for Christian leaders and pastors in places of great influence to become themselves bewitched about the gospel, even the gospel that saved *them*. The duty of the pastor is to guard the truth, is to preach the truth, is to fight for the truth, contend for the truth, and to protect his flock from the bewitching errors. We have to assume that bewitching. And it reaches high levels. You can't even walk into a Christian bookstore and trust everything you find there. There are many bewitching things there.

It was back in 1994 when a document came upon the scene in the evangelical world called "Evangelicals and Catholics Together" – ECT – "Evangelicals and Catholics Together." You'll find on our website a response to it, which we wrote some years ago; still available. This was basically generated by Charles Colson, and some others have pulled together Roman Catholics and quote-unquote evangelical Christians, and they came up with a document that essentially said, "We are to stop evangelizing Roman Catholics and embrace them as brothers - evangelicals and Catholics together." A long, long list of evangelicals signed that, affirming that they embraced Roman Catholicism, which does not deny grace, but demands works as a true gospel. The fallout of this document still exists today.

In the heat of that I was invited to go to Florida to Jim Kennedy's church; he was still around in those days before he went to heaven. And together with Him, and Colson, and Bill Bright from Campus Crusade, and R. C. Sproul, and J. I. Packer, and a few other well-known evangelical leaders, and we were to spend seven or eight hours locked up in a room, trying to clarify the gospel, trying to clarify the gospel for those people who were confused about the gospel, who were wanting to embrace Roman Catholicism. It was one of the most, if not the most, interesting meeting I've ever been to in my life.

Tremendous representation there from the evangelical community, and then those who wanted to embrace Catholicism and false forms of Christianity, and we went at it for seven years – or seven hours. Seven years? We've gone after it a lot more than seven years, that's for sure. But that day it was seven hours. And I remember at the end of the day sitting next to a very prominent man, and we were trying to communicate – R. C. Sproul, myself, Jim Kennedy – trying to communicate the gospel, and the limits of the gospel, and that you can't *add* to the gospel, and that Roman Catholicism *adds* to the gospel works and ceremonies.

Finally, I said to the man I'd been sitting next to for seven hours, "Okay, you tell me. I want to know how to be a Christian. What do I have to believe? What is not enough, and what is too much? What is the irreducible, minimum that must be believed for me to be saved?" to which he replied, and he had written twenty books at least, "That's a good question," to which I replied, "I know that. What is the answer?"

There was no answer. There was no clarity. That's being bewitched. People at a very high level are

bewitched about the true gospel. You can't trust all the preachers you hear. You can't trust them. Churches are full of bewitched people who are confused about the gospel.

Now a little closer look at the word "bewitched" for a moment. It's from the Greek verb *baskain*. That in itself isn't important, except that it's the only time it's ever used in the New Testament. Paul went for a word that isn't used anywhere else. He never uses it anywhere else. He's going outside of his normal vocabulary to find a word to describe this in a unique way. Never used anywhere else in the New Testament; and it's always used in a bad sense.

What does it mean in the Greek language outside the Bible? The word meant "to charm," "to fascinate," but "to fascinate or charm in a misleading way." Always has a bad connotation. It meant "to seek to do harm to someone by lies or deception or false promises." It is even related to magic spells and sorcery, and the evil eye, and demonic power.

It's a very, very serious word, and the Holy Spirit only used it once to describe not what's happening to nonbelievers, but what has happened to believers. It's as if they have been bewitched, not by sorcery, not by magic spells, but by false doctrine. But why would they be bewitched? Why are they susceptible to that?

Listen, in all ages of the church there have been bewitched believers, and there still are today. This is a battle that never, ever, ever ends, because Satan continues to propagate the bewitching lies. And bewitching is always a deviation from the true gospel, some form of salvation by your works: rituals, sacraments, morality; most prominently, Roman Catholicism, Eastern Orthodoxy. That had happened to the church in Galatia.

Now Satan only has two approaches, only two approaches. We see them in Matthew 13 in the words of our Lord. He can, first of all, snatch the gospel seed before it can go into the ground and be productive. And we see that in our Lord's parable of the soils. Satan comes and snatches the seed away before anybody can understand it. That's corrupting the gospel on the front end.

The second thing that Satan does is once the gospel has taken root and believers begin to grow and flourish, then Satan's second approach is to sow tares among the wheat: false believers in a false gospel alongside true believers. And that is corrupting the gospel on the back end. He corrupts it on the front end by snatching it away, often through lack of understanding. He comes back, corrupting it on the back end by bringing into the church corrupt messages that produce corrupt tares among the wheat.

That's what had happened in Galatia. The Word had come and gone into the soil. The seed had brought about life; that life was flourishing and growing. Satan shows up in the form of Jews from Jerusalem who come to demand that if you're going to be saved and forgiven and into the kingdom of God and brought to heaven, you must maintain the Mosaic law and circumcision. This was sowing lies, and therefore, liars and tares among the wheat.

Paul wants to go back and reflect on the wonderful beginning. Go back to chapter 4 for a minute, and verse 13. When he first came, he says, "You know that it was because of a bodily illness that I preached the gospel to you the first time. And that which was a trial to you in my bodily condition you didn't despise or loathe, but you received me as an angel of God, as Christ Jesus Himself." What a

wonderful reception. “You received me as if I were an angel from heaven, or as if I were Christ Jesus Himself.”

And then immediately, verse 15: “Where then is that sense of blessing you had? You would have plucked out your eyes and given them to me. Now you’re believing false teachers. So have I become your enemy by telling you the truth? When you receive me the way you did, as if I were an angel from heaven, as if I were Christ, you embraced the truth. And now you’re turning from it and turning against me?”

Chapter 5, verse 7: “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?” Verse 9: “A little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough.” “How could you ever have fallen for this bewitching set of lies?”

But again I say, I have spent much of my life - and I’m still doing it even now - trying to expose, illuminate the bewitching aberrations of the gospel. It was way back, *The Gospel According to Jesus*. Then it was the book *The Gospel According to the Apostles*. Then it was *The Gospel According to Paul* last year. And now I just finished *The Gospel According to God*. And many, many, many other books dealing with the gospel: *Ashamed of the Gospel*, *Hard to Believe* – many, many other books: *The Jesus You Can’t Ignore*. Always, always, always trying to illuminate the bewitching lies that come around and pollute the gospel.

Yes, believers can be bewitched. Let me make it simple: just as believers can sin against the holiness of God – and we do – they can sin against the truth of God. Just as believers can sin against the holiness of God, they can sin against the truth of God. There is so much confusion in the bewitched church that it is beyond definition.

Paul is heartbroken over the bewitching. It’s a bewitching that comes about because people want popularity, because they want acceptance. If you can go on Oprah, as one self-confessed evangelical did, and Oprah says to you, “Do I, or does a person have to believe in Jesus Christ to enter heaven?” and you say, “No,” you have been bewitched.

Larry King said to me one day, “I’m going to be okay. I’m going to be okay. When I die I’m going to be okay.” I said, “Really. Why do you say that?” He said, “Because a well-known evangelist told me, because I’m Jewish God’s going to take special care of me.” Who bewitched him?

Let’s go back to the text then. “You foolish Galatians,” – “foolish” there and in verse 3, *anotos*. It means “without knowledge,” “ignorant,” “lacking in the power of perception,” “lacking in sense.” It means “deadness and impotence of intellect.” “You’re not using your sanctified minds, you foolish Galatians. Mindlessly you have been bewitched. You’re not thinking.”

So many times Paul writes about a renewed mind: Romans 12, Ephesians 4, Colossians 3. “You need to be renewed in the spirit of your mind. Christianity is about clear thinking, O foolish Galatians.” J. B. Phillips’ translation says, “O you dear idiots, how can you be so stupid?”

This was what our Lord said on the road to Emmaus, Luke 24. He said to those disciples, “O foolish and slow of heart to believe what the prophets have said. Why is it so hard for you to think and believe?” It’s not just mental inability. It’s the sinful heart, neglect of the truth. It’s a mind issue, but it’s

a heart issue. The mind is not applied, carefully examining the truth, because the heart is not diligently devoted to that truth. Paul says, “You’re foolish, and you have become bewitched.”

“Who has bewitched you?” is a rhetorical query. “Who cast a spell on you? Who confused you about the gospel?” Well, the Judaizers did it, of course, by their words and their false teachings. Paul is going to confront that in the most powerful, powerful way.

By the way, as a footnote, if you have a King James Bible or a New King James you see another phrase there: “You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth?” Some of you have that in your text. That appears in some of the old manuscripts, but not the earliest ones, so it probably was added later for clarification. And I understand why; because being bewitched is equal to not obeying the truth. And we see that over in chapter 5, verse 7: “You were running well; who hindered you from obeying the truth?” So perhaps somebody along the way just pulled it from verse 7 and added it into verse 1 to kind of further explain it.

That is exactly the case. If you have been bewitched, then you’re not obeying the truth. Even though it’s not in the original text, it certainly is an accurate assessment. “You are foolish, and in your foolishness you have allowed yourself to be bewitched.”

That’s a pretty obvious thing to all of us, that the mass of people who sit in churches where they are bewitched are altogether foolish, altogether foolish: ignorant of Scripture, or unwilling to apply themselves to the true knowledge of the text. Unless there is going to be a movement back to the Word of God in the pulpit and the pew, the bewitching will continue, because the foolishness will continue. Churches that are full of bewitched people are full of foolish people who have neither applied their minds to the truth, nor set their hearts on being faithful to the truth.

Then Paul launches his argument from a trinitarian perspective: “How did you get to this point? What are you doing? Have you thought about what you’re doing? Let’s go first to your experience.” Verses 1-5 deal with the defense of the gospel by their experience. Then from verse 6 to the end of chapter 4 is a defense of the gospel of grace from Scripture. The bulk of the time, therefore, is on the Scripture and how the Scripture proclaims the gospel of grace. But the first five verses are about their own experience. And he uses the word *pasch* in verse 4, which is translated sometimes “suffer;” but actually refers to “experience.”

“You have experienced these many things. Have you experienced them for nothing? Look at your spiritual experience, and look at it from a trinitarian viewpoint - first of all, the role that Christ played. Your experience started when Christ was proclaimed to you,” – notice verse 1 – “before whose eyes.” That is, “you foolish, bewitched Galatians.” “Before your spiritual eyes, Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed crucified.”

What is that about? “The gospel came to you openly, clearly, powerfully, effectively, publicly portrayed.” That’s a Greek verb *prograph*. The word usually referred to “signs” or “placards.” There weren’t books in the ancient world, and so when somebody had an announcement to make or a declaration to make they would put it on a sign. This was a public sign that would then be displayed in the forum in the marketplace for all to see. They had no newspapers; public announcements were *prographó*, displayed so everyone could read and understand. “You saw with your mental eyes and your spiritual eyes the Christ who is crucified for you.”

What is he assuming here? “That all that the cross meant was declared to you.” What did Paul say? He says, “I preach Christ and Him crucified. To this degree, I’m determined to know nothing among you except Christ and Him crucified.” What does it mean? He preached not just the physical crucifixion of Christ, but the theology of the death of Christ, the soteriology of the death of Christ, the gospel bound up in the death of Christ.

“This was openly declared to you. I preached the gospel to you, and you embraced me like I was an angel. You embraced me as if I was Christ Himself. It isn’t that you just could hear in your imagination the ringing of the hammers as He was nailed to the cross; it isn’t that you could just hear the cries of the mocking crowd, or the cries of Jesus from the cross, or in your mind’s eye, you could see the blood and sweat running down His body; it isn’t just that you saw the physical reality of His death. It was that you understood that it was a substitutionary sacrifice for you. You understood the significance of His death. You understood that He was dying in your place, that your sins were imputed to Him, so that His righteousness could be imputed to you. You understood the gospel of salvation. I preached Christ to you, fully to you, crucified to you, and therefore, risen again. And the reality was you believed, you believed. And miraculously you were transformed. And all those churches in Galatia are a result of the preaching of the gospel of a crucified Christ.

“Now how can you, when you have seen Jesus Christ publicly portrayed crucified, go back to the Law? Are you saying that the cross was unnecessary and you must save yourself, or are you saying that the cross was insufficient, or that the death of Christ was a partial provision, and you have to make up the rest by your works? If you are saying that, you are blaspheming the Christ of the cross. But that’s what a works system does. When it requires something from you, then it’s not all of Christ. You have assaulted Christ.”

By the way, the verb “crucified” at the end of verse 1 is a perfect passive participle - Greek verb which means it has continuing reality. It’s not just crucified at a moment in historical past; it’s continually, ongoingly crucified. What is the point of that? This destroys legalism, because what it’s saying is, the cross wasn’t just a historic event; the cross goes on, and on, and on, and on, in its impact and its power. That is why the Bible says in 1 John 1:9 that “He is still righteous to keep on forgiving our sins.”

Legalism doesn’t pick up where the cross left off, because the cross never leaves off. The cross work is never done; it never stops. It isn’t that Christ did something that was necessary for us and then He was finished, and now we have to pick up the work. That is offensive to Christ. That is a blasphemy against His finished work. The book of Hebrews says, “He perfected forever those that are sanctified by the one offering of Himself.”

The cross lacks nothing. The cross lacks nothing. Salvation is by grace alone, through faith alone, and not by works. If you bring works in, chapter 5, verse 2, “Christ will be of no benefit to you.” Verse 4, if you bring works in, “You’ve been severed from Christ, you who are seeking to be justified by law; you have fallen from grace.” That would be the tares among the wheat that were being tolerated by the bewitched believers of Galatia.

This is not a small thing. Anyone who adds works to salvation blasphemes the sufficiency of the cross work of Jesus Christ. Why would they do that? They had a clear view of the cross and all of its



saving elements.

And they knew from personal experience, that when they put their trust in the crucified and risen Christ, they were transformed. They knew that. They knew justification was by grace through faith in a crucified Christ, because they had done it and received it. They had that experience.

Was that experience in vain? Was it for nothing? And now somehow, was that some kind of false feeling, an illusion, something that never really happened until you get circumcised, and keep the rituals and the ceremonies? What could Judaizers or what could anybody else add to Christ's work on the cross? Answer – What? – nothing. Don't be bewitched.

Secondly, they not only had personal experience with faith in the crucified Christ, they had personal experience with the Holy Spirit. Verse 2: "This is the only thing I want to find out from you:" – this is so important; here it is – "Did you receive the Spirit?" Let's stop there.

"Did you receive the Spirit?" Yes. Yes, because everyone who believes receives the Holy Spirit, right? Romans 8 and 9: Holy Spirit lives in every believer; you're the temple of the Spirit of God. He dwells in all of us. "If any man have not the Spirit, he's not His." We all have received the Spirit. The Holy Spirit has taken up residence in our life. He is the life of God in us. He comes in, transforms us; we become new creations. Everything becomes new.

So he says to them, "Did you receive the Spirit?" "Well, yes, we certainly did, transforming our lives. We have new loves, new affections, new desires. There are things that we used to love that we hate, and things we used to hate that we love. And now we love the brethren, and we love the truth, and we love God, and we love virtue; and we didn't love any of that."

"So you did receive the Spirit. Did you receive the Spirit, then, by the works of the Law or by hearing with faith?" What's the answer? By faith. "When you believed, you received the Spirit. There was no requirement that said you're not going to get the Holy Spirit until you do certain things." That is another bewitching lie that floats around, that you can be a Christian without the Holy Spirit until you attain some level of spirituality. Every believer has the Holy Spirit. So the work of Christ was a finished work, not requiring anything from the Law; and the coming of the Holy Spirit was a complete work, not requiring anything from the Law either. He came by faith.

"Are you so foolish?" – verse 3 – "Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?" In other words, "Is the work of Christ only partial and you have to add the important part? And is the presence of the Holy Spirit only partial and you have to add the important part; and in both cases, the important part is something your flesh produces? See this for what it is: Christ's work is complete, the Holy Spirit's presence is complete, the Law adds *nothing* to the work of Christ, the Law adds *nothing* to the work of the Holy Spirit."

And then there's a final comment in verse 5: "Did you experience Christ for nothing? Did you experience the Holy Spirit for nothing—if indeed it was for nothing?"

And what about the Father? Look at verse 5. This is such a simple point, but so important: "So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit and works miracles among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?"

This is talking about the Father. How do you know that? Because in Luke 11:13, in John 14:16 and 26, twice, Jesus says, “When I go, the Father will send the Spirit.” So he says in verse 5, “So then, does He who provides you with the Spirit” – that’s the Father. The Father is the one who provides you with the Spirit; He is one of the gifts of the Father. And, by the way, the word “provides,” *epichorge*, root word *chorge*, means “bountifully,” “abundantly,” “super abundantly,” “lavishly.”

“So then, are you saying that the Father who lavishly provided you with the Spirit and works miracles among you,” – perhaps the apostolic miracles, but perhaps even more significantly, the miracle of regeneration done by God – “are you saying that He does that by the works of the Law because you’ve earned it? Did God save you because of something you did? Did God come and miraculously transform you because of something you did, or simply by the hearing with faith?”

And we know the answer to this: The Son did a complete work on your behalf, the Spirit did a complete work on your behalf, and the Father did a complete work on your behalf. Nothing is left out. You didn’t receive salvation or the Holy Spirit or regeneration by anything you did, it was the full and perfect work of Christ, the full and perfect work of the Spirit, the full and perfect work of the Father.

“You’ve experienced that. You’ve experienced power of the gospel in your life. You’ve experienced the power of the Spirit in your life. You’ve experienced the power of the Father in your life. You’ve been living in that trinitarian power. And now all of a sudden, these bewitching Jews show up and tell you that all of this is inadequate.” That is a blasphemous assault on the Triune God. It diminishes the work of Christ on the cross, the work of the Holy Spirit in the believer, and the work of the Father in the miracle of regeneration. The whole Trinity and all that the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit have to offer you is yours by faith and faith alone. “You foolish Galatians. Are you so bewitched?” “You are,” says Paul to the Colossians, “complete in Him.”

When anybody comes along and adds anything, it is a bewitching. And foolish people follow that bewitching, many of them true believers who have neither the spiritual reason or the heart devotion to hold them tightly to the truth. I pray that God will grant you that strength.

Father, we thank You again this morning for the time to worship You, a privilege above all privileges. Thank You for beautiful music and praise. Thank You that we can come to You with prayers of our hearts. We thank You for Your Word; it literally overwhelms us. We love it. We love its truth, we feast on it. Thank You for the illumination, the enlightenment that comes to all our hearts.

And thank You for the love that it generates - love for You: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Thank You for the fullness of the work that You’ve done in us, a complete salvation wrought at the cross, a complete enabling wrought by the indwelling of the fullness of the Holy Spirit, a complete transformation by the massive miracle of regeneration, and the other miracle to come: glorification. We worship You from the bottom of our hearts with joy and thanksgiving for the salvation that is ours. We have sung the songs of deliverance, and singing them is our highest privilege. For all that You’ve done for us, we offer You our praise. We thank You. Amen.

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