



THE HOLY SPIRIT

Pour Out Your Spirit On Us! **Galatians 3:1-5**

M O N T H

Galatians 5 describes a power struggle. This power struggle has been occurring all of your Christian life. God's Word says, "For the flesh has desires that are opposed to the Spirit, and the Spirit has desires that are opposed to the flesh, for these are in opposition to each other, so that you cannot do what you want" (Gal. 5:17). The Holy Spirit is trying to pull you in a certain direction and your flesh is crying out in opposition to His agenda, going the other direction. We don't want to trust; we don't want to lose control; we feel like we know so much better than the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit is pulling us towards love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control (Gal. 5:22-23). Where our flesh is pulling us towards sexual immorality, impurity, idolatry, hostilities, jealousy, outbursts of anger, envy, and drunkenness (Gal. 5:19-21).

The Galatians struggled like you and I do to allow the Holy Spirit to "pull the rope" in their lives. A group of Judaizers had come into their community after the departure of Paul and had confused the Gospel, and because the Gospel was confused, so was their understanding of the Holy Spirit. In Galatians 3, Paul asks four questions that we as a church must ask as we pray for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit in 2020:

1. How did we receive the Holy Spirit?
2. Having received the Holy Spirit, is it now up to our flesh to make us perfect?
3. Is the suffering we experience meaningless or even a sign that we are outside the will of God?
4. Where do the miraculous works of the Holy Spirit come from?

'O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you that you should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was clearly portrayed among you as crucified? ² This only I want to learn from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? ³ Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh? ⁴ Have you suffered so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith? (Galatians 3:1-5)

"The event" in salvation history was Christ - Him crucified! Why were the Galatians mesmerized by the Judaizers? Because they failed to keep their eyes on Christ & Him crucified! Jesus' cross and resurrection are the underpinning of everything experienced in the Christian life.

Question #1 (vs. 2): Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

It's interesting that he doesn't question their salvation, He actually assumes it. He says that there are two possibilities: You received the Holy Spirit by 1) the works of the law or 2) by the hearing of faith ("hearing of faith" is an expression of faith in Christ).

The Law revealed sin and death. The job of the Law and sacrifices was for us to feel defeated in our sin and brokenness and move us rapidly to the foot of the cross. It is faith and faith alone in Christ alone that is the defining characteristic of the people of God. We received the Spirit the moment we believed (Rom. 8:9), not through the blood of Abraham or the works of the Law or through human effort or striving. The Law was outside of us, but God is now within us accomplishing all that we could never do under the Law through His power, not our own! (Rom. 8, Gal 3:19-29).

Question #2 (vs. 3): Having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made perfect by the flesh?

If you began in the Spirit by faith, why would you think that somehow faith and grace end at justification and now it is up to us to become perfect by the flesh, by our own resources? None of us thinks that we are saved by the Law, but many of us think we can be perfected by the flesh! We are commanded to allow the Holy Spirit to impact our life, to control our life (Eph. 5:18).

Question #3 (vs. 4): Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed *it was* in vain?

This is an interesting question. The Judaizers, like many false teachers, proclaimed that suffering was an indication that you were outside of the will of God. But these Christians in south Galatia endured suffering and persecution. Acts 14 describes it in detail. Suffering wasn't a sign they were getting the Christian life wrong; suffering most often is a sign that we are getting this right! Paul spends half the Book of 2 Corinthians boasting of his suffering as a true apostle of Jesus Christ. His prayer in Philippians 3 is that He would *know Christ and the power of His resurrection, and the fellowship of His sufferings, being conformed to His death* (Phil. 3:10). According to Paul, the real evil was to suffer all these things while forsaking the true Gospel and the indwelling ministry of the Holy Spirit.

Question #4 (vs. 5): Therefore He who supplies the Spirit to you and works miracles among you, *does He do it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?*

This last question focuses on the basis of God's ongoing ministry of the Holy Spirit among the Galatians. In what way does God so graciously bestow His blessings through His Spirit? Through the works of the Law or through faith in Christ? The Galatian church had experienced the miraculous power of Almighty God. They knew it; God knew it; everyone knew it! God was very generous with them in so many ways as He is with us! It's faith that relies on the Holy Spirit to act; we don't take things into our own hands - we respond to His movement.

POUR OUT YOUR SPIRIT ON US!

Can you hear the Holy Spirit's voice in your life?

How is He talking to you through Scripture? What is He saying to you as you listen to praise music and stare at the beautiful blue sky as you drive home from work? How is He trying to get your attention through the voices in your HUB group or discipleship relationships? As you sit quietly, what is He saying to you?

This is what He might be saying to you this morning, "I love you. Trust my love and stop pulling in the opposite direction!" This is not a tug-of-war. This is a joyful and thrilling ride as we trust a real Person who really does reside in us, who really does love us and knows what He is talking about.

The Holy Spirit wants to carry the load. He is smart, strong and courageous. He leads from the front and if we as church family resolve in our hearts to say "yes" to Him, He is going to transform this community!