

Becoming Stupid
Galatians 3:1-6
Discussion Guide

One mistake that we often make when referring to the Gospel is to believe that God's salvation is cheap. We think this way out of a misunderstanding of grace. Our salvation is a gift from God to us which we did not and cannot earn. But that does not mean that the Gospel is cheap.

Jesus paid a high price for our redemption. The life of the perfect Lamb of God is the cost. And what's more, the spread of the Gospel comes at a great price of human effort and suffering. We have spent several weeks in Galatians examining Paul's biography and seeing how he is a microcosm of the story of both grace and suffering. The conclusion that Paul always draws from his own story is that the Gospel is something to be treasured above everything else on earth.

When we understand the treasure of the Gospel through this lens, it makes sense why Paul would be willing to risk offending people in his defense of the Gospel in Galatians 3. Paul isn't about to let the young believers in Galatia throw away the great value of the Gospel simply because they are acting foolishly. Listen to his words.

Galatians 3:1-6

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"?

Austin identifies 5 harsh rhetorical questions that Paul asks in these verses.

- 1) Do you understand how stupid it is to water down the work of Christ on the cross (v. 1)?
- 2) Did you forget that you didn't do any religious act to get saved (v. 2)?
- 3) If religion didn't save you, why do you think it will perfect what did save you (v. 3)?
- 4) Why would you suffer for trusting Jesus to save you, but not trust him to mature you (v. 4)?
- 5) Have you ever seen God do anything because you earned it (vv. 5-6)?

Discussion

- **How did Paul demonstrate the value of the Gospel in Galatia?**
- **What do you think made the Galatians see value in the Gospel?**
- **What could have possibly persuaded the Galatians to embrace religion after they had been saved by grace through faith?**

- **Why do you think Paul is particularly harsh in the way that he questions the churches?**
- **What did Jesus mean when he said “it is finished” (John 19:30)?**
- **How do we water down the completed perfection of the work of Jesus on the cross in our own day?**
- **How do churches often preach rightly about justification (becoming saved), but then preach religious heresy about sanctification (growing like Christ in salvation)?**
- **Have you examined a belief you held in which you thought you could improve upon God’s plan of salvation in your own life?**
- **How did God reveal this to you?**
- **Tell about one way that God’s free grace has grown you to be more Christ-like when religion made you less like Christ.**