

Daily Devotional, September 28, 2020 Did You Hear Me?

I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you to live in the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. You foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: “Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law.” Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because “the righteous will live by faith.” The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, “The person who does these things will live by them.” Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: “Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole.” He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. We were held in custody under the law, locked up until the faith that was to come would be revealed. So the law was our guardian until Christ came that we might be justified by faith. Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian. Galatians 1:6-7, 3:1, 10-14, 23-25 (NIV)

King: Guards! Make sure the Prince doesn't leave this room until I come and get him.

Guard 1: Not to leave the room even if you come and get him.

King: No, no. Until I come and get him.

Guard 1: Until you come and get him, we're not to enter the room.

King: No, no, no. You stay in the room and make sure he doesn't leave.

Guard1: And you'll come and get him.

King: Right.

Guard 1: We don't need to do anything, apart from just stop him entering the room.

King: No, no. Leaving the room.

Guard 1: Leaving the room, yes.

King: Look, it's quite simple. You just stay here, and make sure he doesn't leave the room. All right?

Guard 1: Oh, yes, we'll keep him in here, obviously. But if he had to leave and we were with him--

King: No, no, just keep him in here!

Guard 1: Right, we'll stay here until you get back.

King: And, uh, make sure he doesn't leave.

Guard 1: What?

King: Make sure he doesn't leave.

Guard 1: The Prince?

King: Yes, make sure he doesn't leave.

Guard 1: Oh, yes, of course. I thought you meant him (pointing to Guard 2). You know, it seemed a bit daft, me having to guard him when he's a guard.

King: Is that clear?

Guard 1: Oh, quite clear, no problems.

King: Right. [he starts to leave, the guards follow] Where are you going?

Guard 1: We're coming with you.

King: No, no, I want you to stay here and make sure he doesn't leave.

Guard 1: Oh, I see. Right.

Do you ever sense that you are simply not getting your message across? This scene from *Monty Python and the Holy Grail* describes exactly how my dad and mom, my teachers and coaches must have felt when trying to relate their orders to me and the parents of other youth that went unheard, ignored, or possibly misunderstood as I related in yesterday's sermon. It is the way that Paul must have felt when he delivered the gospel message to the Galatians, only to learn later that they had instead begun to follow *another* gospel which we see in Galatians 1 and 3. It was a belief that looked nothing like the one he had taught them. He had to have wondered if they had be listening at all!

The problem with this “other” gospel was that it had no basis in truth. Rather than adhering to faith in Christ alone, there were many other conditions that broadly promoted returning to the law as a condition for reaching salvation. And Paul was fit to be tied.

Calling the Galatians “foolish” for being bamboozled, Paul had made a very clear distinction between faith and the law and how totally different the two are. Paul explains that “*all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse*” and that “*Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God*”. He says that Christ came to redeem us from this curse “*by becoming a curse for us*”, and his sacrifice made it possible for us to experience “*the blessing given to Abraham*”, not through works of the law but through faith.

The difference between these two methods, by works and by faith, cannot be overemphasized. Paul clearly states that the law, rather than being the source of our salvation, was “*our guardian until Christ came*”, guiding us and directing us to the Messiah who would at last bring our salvation. “*Now that this faith has come, we are no longer under a guardian*”. Instead, those who believe in Jesus can join the family of faith.

What this should make clear to us is that the grace that is ours in Christ is available by faith and by faith alone. Don’t ever let anyone try to add anything to this gospel. While it may be alluring to think our good deeds can add to our salvation, these are the things that come from the heart in gratitude for the grace we have been shown by God, and are not “merits” that earn us extra favor. When we view our deeds in any other way, all that we do is lapse back into the law, and infect our minds by falling prey to the law’s harsh demands, which have no power over us at all if our faith in Christ remains firm.

If, as Paul says, the Galatians were foolish enough to relapse into that way of thinking, wouldn’t we be equally foolish to do the same? The same curses still hold true for those who rely on good works to be saved, but the blessing of salvation also remains true for those who will put their trust in Christ alone.

Our King’s teaching is clear: Make sure to guard the faith that has been delivered to you and don’t permit the truth of the gospel to be crowded out by any other false teaching or convoluted thoughts. Don’t ever discard the gospel truth for something that sounds good, even sounds convincing, but is anything but the truth—the God’s honest truth!

Did you hear me?

Prayer: Dear Lord, thank You for Your written Word and the mighty truths it contains. I pray that in the power of Your Holy Spirit, You would open my heart and mind to the truths that You wish me to see. Prevent any internal voices from drowning out the still small voice of Your Holy Spirit. And should I stray from the truth of these passages, bring me to see any error and guide me back to the truth. May I grow in grace and in knowledge of the teachings of my Lord Jesus today. Feed my heart by faith. In Jesus' name, Amen.