

September 25–October 1. Galatians: “Walk in the Spirit”

Introduction

Bruce R. McConkie

“These Galatians are Gentile converts. They are now being contaminated by Jewish-Christians who tell them they must live the law of Moses to be saved. *Paul’s purpose is to call them back to Christ and his gospel.*”

“Galatians is thus written to people who are losing the true faith, who are adopting false doctrines and ordinances, who are being overcome by the world, who are commingling the dead law of Moses with the living word which is in Christ.”
(Doctrinal New Testament Commentary, 2:455)

We will discuss what was causing them to lose the true faith;
why they were adopting false doctrines and ordinances;
what was causing them to mix the dead law with the law of Christ;
and why they were struggling to overcome the world and cling to the ways of Christ

Recognize and Forsake False Doctrine

Paul taught the Galatians on his first missionary journey and established a church there. We are surprised at how quickly they had departed from some of the fundamental truths that he had personally taught them

Gal 1:6-9

[6] I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ unto another gospel:

[7] Which is not another; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the gospel of Christ.

[8] But though we, or an angel from heaven, preach any other gospel unto you than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.

[9] As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed.

What had the Galatians done that surprised Paul and what was he warning them about?

(I marvel that ye are so soon removed [by false teachers that] pervert the gospel of Christ)

What was the standard Paul set for staying on the gospel path?

(that which we have preached unto you
If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received)

Howard W. Hunter

"Paul taught the true gospel of Jesus Christ to the people of Galatia and, after he left them, spurious teachers came and turned them from his teachings. This gave rise to the letter written by Paul in strong language of criticism, denouncing those who would pervert his teachings.

"Today is not different. We are surrounded by frustrations and advances in thought and learning which raise questions and doubts. These seem to drag men down and destroy faith and morality. Where, then, is hope in this world of frustration and moral decay? It lies in the knowledge and understanding of the truths taught by the Master, which must be taught by the Church of Christ without deviation." (CR, Oct 1973)

He gives a litmus test for recognizing if someone is teaching the gospel of Christ or the philosophies of man

Gal 1:10-12

[10] For do I now persuade men, or God? or do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ.

[11] But I certify you, brethren, that the gospel which was preached of me is not after man.

[12] For I neither received it of man, neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.

What is a standard Paul gives us to tell if someone is teaching the true gospel?

(do I seek to please men? for if I yet pleased men, I should not be the servant of Christ
neither was I taught it, but by the revelation of Jesus Christ.)

Bruce R. McConkie

"It was with Paul as it is with us-of course we are taught the gospel by others; of course we study it out of the revealed word; but in the final analysis, it comes to us by revelation, the Holy Spirit of God bearing witness to the spirit within us that the holy word is true. In the ultimate and true sense, it does not come to us by the power of man, but by the power of God. And thus we build our house of salvation upon the rock of revelation." (A New Witness for the Articles of Faith, pg. 489)

He recognizes that they built their understanding of Christ on a foundation of faith. Now he tells them that they cannot build on that foundation using the philosophies of man

Gal 3:1-5

[1] O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?

[2] This only would I learn of you, Received ye the Spirit by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

[3] Are ye so foolish? having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?

[4] Have ye suffered so many things in vain? if it be yet in vain.

[5] He therefore that ministereth to you the Spirit, and worketh miracles among you, doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith?

Why was Paul calling the Galatians fools?

What do you think Paul meant by, “having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect by the flesh?”

(doeth he it by the works of the law, or by the hearing of faith)

John Taylor

"This people know something of God; and if they do not there is not anybody under the heavens that does.... If they do not, what better are we than the world? It would be with us as with some of the ancient Saints, who were told they had commenced in the spirit and sought to be made perfect in the flesh; they commenced with the wisdom of God and sought to perfect themselves by worldly wisdom and human judgment. *To know God and the ways of life is infinitely more important than any worldly consideration.*"
(JD, 10:113)

Paul ask the Galatians how, after they had come to understand the nature of God, they could seek again for understanding from the weak thinks of the world

Gal 4:3-9

3 Even so we, when we were children, were in bondage under the elements of the world:

4 But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law,

5 To redeem them that were under the law, that we might receive the adoption of sons.

6 And because ye are sons, God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father.

7 Wherefore thou art no more a servant, but a son; and if a son, then an heir of God through Christ.

8 Howbeit then, when ye knew not God, ye did service unto them which by nature are no gods.

9 But now, after that ye have known God, or rather are known of God, how turn ye again to the weak and beggarly elements, whereunto ye desire again to be in bondage?

How had the Galatians gained an understanding that God was their spiritual Father?

(God hath sent forth the Spirit of his Son into your hearts, crying, Abba, Father)

John Taylor

“We are trying to feel after our Heavenly Father and he is trying to have us feel after him, and he is pouring out his Spirit upon us from time to time, and causing us to cry, 'Abba, Father,' and to feel that we are his children, and therefore we feel to bow with reverence before him as our Father, our God and deliverer, and to put our trust in him.... That which flows from the Great Eloheim will deliver us from our folly and bring us out of the labyrinth of mystery into the light of truth.” (JD, 9:275)

One Gospel For All Cultures

Paul used Peter as an example. Peter demonstrated that he recognized the old law was no longer in effect by associating and eating with Gentiles. But it seem that even Peter was influenced by the false practice of the Jewish members that believed the old ways should still be followed

Gal 2:11-14

[11] But when Peter was come to Antioch, I withstood him to the face, because he was to be blamed.

[12] For before that certain came from James, he did eat with the Gentiles: but when they were come, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing them which were of the circumcision.

[13] And the other Jews dissembled likewise with him; insomuch that Barnabas also was carried away with their dissimulation.

[14] But when I saw that they walked not uprightly according to the truth of the gospel, I said unto Peter before them all, If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?

What argument did Paul make for not compelling Gentiles to live as Jews

(If thou, being a Jew, livest after the manner of Gentiles, and not as do the Jews, why compellest thou the Gentiles to live as do the Jews?)

There was no reason for the Gentiles to comply with Jewish culture

What lesson can we learn about separating culture from the gospel?

Dallin H. Oaks

"In these examples I am not contrasting the culture or traditions of one part of the world with another. I am contrasting the Lord's way with the world's way—the culture of the gospel of Jesus Christ with the culture or traditions of every nation or people. No group has a monopoly on virtue or an immunity from the commandment to change. Jesus and His Apostles did not attempt to make Gentiles into Jews. They taught Gentiles and Jews, attempting to make each of them into followers of Christ." (CR, Oct. 2003)

Why do you think it was so difficult for the Jewish Christians to let go of their culture – even to the point that they thought it was mandatory for the Gentiles to embrace it?

Maybe the strict path of the carnal law is easier to recognize (more black & white) than the straight and narrow path of the spiritual law

In emphasizing that members of the Church can have different cultures and can differ in their station in life, Paul stresses we are united by Christ and our belief and testimony of Him

Gal 3:26-29

[26] For ye are all the children of God by faith in Christ Jesus.

[27] For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ.

[28] There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.

[29] And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.

What is promised to all – Jew and Gentile – who take upon them the name of Christ?

(ye are all one in Christ Jesus. And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise)

Russell M. Nelson

"On every continent and across isles of the sea, the faithful are being gathered into The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. Differences in cultural background, language, gender, and facial features fade into insignificance as members lose themselves in service to their beloved Savior. Paul's declaration is being fulfilled: 'There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus.'

"Only the comprehension of the true Fatherhood of God can bring full appreciation of the true brotherhood of man. That understanding inspires desire to build bridges of cooperation instead of walls of segregation." (CR, April 1994)

Justification

Paul reminds the Galatians of one of the promises made to Abraham - "In thee shall all nations be blessed". Through faith in Christ the Gentiles can also be justified

Gal 3:6-9

[6] Even as Abraham believed God, and it was accounted to him for righteousness.

[7] Know ye therefore that they which are of faith, the same are the children of

Abraham.

[8] And the scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith, preached before the gospel unto Abraham, saying, In thee shall all nations be blessed.

[9] So then they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham.

How is it possible that anyone, not just decedents of Abraham, can receive the blessings and promises made to Abraham?

(justify the heathen through faith
they which be of faith are blessed with faithful Abraham)

Bruce R. McConkie

"By the law of adoption those who receive the gospel and obey its laws, no matter what their literal blood lineage may have been, are adopted into the lineage of Abraham.

"The faithful are adopted to the family of Christ; they become 'the children of Christ, his sons, and his daughters'; they are 'spiritually begotten,' for their 'hearts are changed through faith on his name,' thus being 'born of him,' becoming 'his sons and his daughters' (Mosiah 5:7)." (Mormon Doctrine, pg. 23)

In verse 8 Paul states, "foreseeing that God would justify the heathen through faith"

What does it mean to be justified?

"To be pardoned from punishment for sin and declared guiltless"
(Guide to the Scriptures, "Justification, Justify," scriptures.lds.org)

"Being born again justifies us before the Lord"
(Doctrines of the Gospel Student Manual Religion 430 and 431, pg. 49)

What are some other words or phrases we use in the gospel that are synonymous with justification?

(Born again, Reconciled, Enter the gate, Made clean, Heart changed, Walk in a newness of life, Transformed)

Paul tells us that we are justified by faith in Christ. And when we are justified the carnal man dies and we are alive in Christ

Gal 2:16-20

[16] Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified.

[17] But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid.

[18] For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor.

[19] For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God.

[20] I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me.

What does Paul say that makes it clear that he has been justified?

(Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son)

Bruce R. McConkie

"This wondrous concept is one about which the apostles of old had much to say. 'I am crucified with Christ' (Gal 2:20), Paul said, meaning that he had 'crucified' the 'old man,... the body of sin,' that henceforth he 'should not serve sin' (Rom 6:6). As a result he was able to say: 'Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God' (Gal 2:20)." (The Promised Messiah: The First Coming of Christ, pg. 125)

Paul tells us that being justified by Christ makes us truly free and he tells us what we must do to keep that freedom

Gal 5:1,13-14

[1] Stand fast therefore in the liberty wherewith Christ hath made us free, and be not entangled again with the yoke of bondage.

[13] For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another.

[14] For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

How has Christ given everyone the opportunity for true liberty and freedom?

(liberated from the carnal – free to follow spiritual laws)

Gordon B. Hinckley

"True freedom lies in obedience to the counsels of God. It was said of old that 'the commandment is a lamp; and the law is light' (Prov 6:23).

"The gospel is not a philosophy of repression, as so many regard it. It is a plan of freedom that gives discipline to appetite and direction to behavior. Its fruits are sweet and its rewards are liberal." (CR, April 1965)

What should we do with this freedom that Christ has given us?

(use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another)

Gal 5:16-17

[16] This I say then, Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfill the lust of the flesh.

[17] For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh: and these are contrary the one to the other: so that ye cannot do the things that ye would.

If you follow the flesh “ye cannot do the things that ye would”

What do we need to do to successfully turn away from the things of the flesh?

(Walk in the Spirit)

Russell M. Nelson

"We can change our behavior. Our very desires can change. How? There is only one way. True change—permanent change—can come only through the healing, cleansing, and enabling power of the Atonement of Jesus Christ. He loves you—each of you! He allows you to access His power as you keep His commandments, eagerly, earnestly, and exactly. It is that simple and certain. The gospel of Jesus Christ is a gospel of change!

"A strong human spirit with control over appetites of the flesh is master over emotions and passions and not a slave to them. That kind of freedom is as vital to the spirit as oxygen is to the body! Freedom from self-slavery is true liberation!" (CR, Oct. 2013)

We are promised we will be free from corruption and reap eternal life if we “soweth to the Spirit”

Gal 6:7-10

[7] Be not deceived; God is not mocked: for whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap.

[8] For he that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption; but he that soweth to the Spirit shall of the Spirit reap life everlasting.

[9] And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

[10] As we have therefore opportunity, let us do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith.

What do you think Paul means when he says that we should, “soweth to the Spirit”?

Marvin J. Ashton

"There are those who dangle false enticements of peace before us. These are they who are greedy and power hungry. Be not deceived; God is not mocked:... He that soweth to his flesh shall of the flesh reap corruption.' Inner peace flees from those who sacrifice virtue for sexual promiscuity. Wickedness, no matter how it is labeled or camouflaged, will eventually

bring grief and heartache and wipe out inner peace.

"Peace will never be the possession of those who participate in vulgar conversations and behavior. *Let us not be planters of poisonous seeds. Rather let us nourish roots of peace in the soil of righteous principles.*" (CR, Oct. 1985)

Just so there's no misunderstanding, Paul innumerates some of the works of flesh and some of the works of the spirit

Gal 5:19-26

[19] Now the works of the flesh are manifest, which are these; Adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness,

[20] Idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies,

[21] Envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like: of the which I tell you before, as I have also told you in time past, that they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God.

[22] But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness, goodness, faith,

[23] Meekness, temperance: against such there is no law.

[24] And they that are Christ's have crucified the flesh with the affections and lusts.

[25] If we live in the Spirit, let us also walk in the Spirit.

[26] Let us not be desirous of vain glory, provoking one another, envying on another.

David O. McKay

"You remember what Paul says in his epistle to the Galatians, about the works of the flesh...

"And then in contrast he says: 'Now the fruits of the spirit are these, love, joy, peace' and so on, and the blessings that will follow. There are two things always that we should keep in mind: one, the beauty of a righteous life; the other, the warning against indulgence in the evil life, and you cannot get away from that." (CR, April 1949)