

# YOU FOOLS!

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## Video: You Fool!

### Fool:

One who is deficient in judgment, sense, or understanding.

One who acts unwisely on a given occasion.

One who has been tricked or made to appear ridiculous; a dupe.

This morning in Galatians we are going to look at why Paul stopped calling the people of Galatia "brothers" and started calling them "fools!"

## The Word Love

The word "love" is almost a bankrupt word. We use it for everything, so it kind of means nothing. You say you love your wife or husband, but also you love tacos? Loving tacos is crazy! (unless they're Doritos Tacos) You loving a mexi-melt, historically speaking, doesn't even make sense.

We have stripped away its meaning and made it a shell of itself. It has become a fluffy happy word that is void of the strength and stamina that the actual word possesses.

When you love someone, you tend to encourage their strengths and praise them for their abilities. When we receive that praise from other, we love it. If love is just you encouraging my strengths and pointing out where I excel, if your love for me is all about me...I love that love.

ACTUAL love is denser than that. It's thicker and has more layers. Yes, love encourages and edifies and serves, but it also rebukes when it sees the ones it loves heading on a course that leads to destruction.

## I Used To Whoop My Kids At Video Games

I figured everyone else in their life would go easy on them and give them what they wanted, my job was to teach them resilience, endurance, how to deal with frustration and also for them to grow believing that their dad was The Man! I didn't just want to beat them, I wanted to destroy them. If I could make them rage quit or throw their controller, I knew I was doing the Lord's work. This was tough love, REAL love. Now they beat me at most games.

Our culture today only wants the praise side of love but not the side that exposes what's wrong with us. For someone to engage with what's wrong with us is looked at as un-loving.

So, what we have seen from Paul for the first two chapters of Galatians is that he sees people that he loves in Galatia, people who had the truth, people who had the Gospel and traded it for rules and a works based salvation, get off the rails and head towards spiritual destruction.

He started off, an encourager, addressing them as "brothers." He has entreated and pleaded with them and now is moving to downright rebuke. All of this is done under the banner of love and with the purpose of getting the people of Galatia back on track and in step with God.

So, while this text reads harshly, it is birthed out of the kind of love that would yell at your kid in the street to save them from getting hit.

## **Galatians 3:1**

*O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you? It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified.*

Earlier they were "brothers" and now they are fools.

Paul says they are fools and they are being controlled like they are under a spell. They are foolish because Christ was clearly crucified before their eyes.

Now, we need to clarify that no one in Galatia, present day Turkey, actually saw Jesus with their eyes. So what's he saying?

It's hyperbole. This message was as clear as if you had seen Jesus crucified with your own eyes. Paul uses this figure of speech to drive home the point that the thing that held their salvation together was CHRIST CRUCIFIED. Their salvation wasn't based on anything they did or earned, but by the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ alone.

That's how they heard it, that's how they understood it, that's how they came to be believers. Paul says, this is what you learned, but now you are bewitched because you believe there is another way for you to be saved, and this makes you fools. Martin Luther takes it even further:

*Of all the diseased and vicious doctrines of the papacy the worst is this: "If you want to serve God you must earn your own remission of sins and everlasting life, and in addition help others to obtain salvation by giving them the benefit of your extra work-holiness."*

*No wonder Paul employs such sharp language in his effort to recall the Galatians from the doctrine of the false apostles. He says to them: "Don't you realize what you have done? You have crucified Christ anew because you seek salvation by the Law."*

*True, Christ can no longer be crucified in person, but He is crucified in us when we reject grace, faith, free remission of sins and endeavor to be justified by our own works, or by the works of the Law.*

*The Apostle is incensed at the presumptuousness of any person who thinks he can perform the Law of God to his own salvation. He charges that person with the atrocity of crucifying anew the Son of God.*

## **Galatians 3:2-3**

*Let me ask you only this: Did you receive the Spirit by 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?*

He's reminding the Galatians of where they were when they got saved.

Where were you when Christ found you?

Were you a bad guy? A good guy? Did he wait for you to clean up your act first?

## **VIDEO: Princess Bride:**

Vizzini: And remember this, never forget this: when I found you, you were so slobbering drunk, you couldn't buy Brandy!

[turning to Fezzik]

Vizzini: And YOU: friendless, brainless, helpless, hopeless! Do you want me to send you back to where you were? Unemployed, in Greenland!

Jesus alone saved you. He is the author and perfecter of our faith.

Paul's reasoning is if you were saved at your worst, what makes you think that God loves you less now, that you would have to earn, what he gave away so easily?

Being perfected in our faith is painfully slow. Many times I just want to wake up and not struggle with sin. I want my mind to be fully renewed. I want to be in complete control over my selfishness, greed, pride, lust, temper, laziness, etc. Processes that take a long time really frustrate me.

Even when we are growing in Christ, it happens so slowly, most of the time we don't even realize it. Then a moment comes where we suddenly realize that God grew us.

## **Watching our kids grow**

This past weekend my baby girl, Ava turned 18 and became an adult. I've been pouring over the 20,000+ pictures and videos I have of her. In some ways it feels like it has been so quick and in other ways it feels like it's taken forever.

## **VIDEO: Ava**

Maturity in Christ is similar, it's slow, uphill both ways, and never as fast as we want it.

**Matt Chandler:** "You will slowly etch one step at a time. Take two steps forward and one step back, which is still progress. And you will stumble into eternity into the safe hands of Jesus Christ."

But then we respond to a situation differently and we realize that God has been growing us. Most commonly someone asks us a question and we surprise ourselves with an answer. And we either think "I'm brilliant! I'm out here spitting bars for Jesus" Or we "blame" the Holy Spirit.

But maybe even more likely, we have been absorbing and thinking about these things and God has been growing us, and we just didn't realize it until we had to use it. The maturity that God has been building suddenly comes out.

## **Karate Kid: Daniel is trained through waxing and painting.**

Paul's point is: if you were saved and sanctified by Christ, why would you go back to the Law, which did not save you and did not sanctify you?

### **Galatians 3:4**

*Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?*

Paul was persecuted for his faith and so were the other followers of Christ. Paul is asking them, "Think about all you sacrificed to follow Christ. You lost your possessions, you have been attacked, you have suffered and now you have lost Christ. How terrible to go through all of this and be left with nothing."

### **EVERQUEST**

Everquest is an online fantasy video game, its been around for like 25 years. There was a story in Wired magazine about a player who earned a power to make powerful enchanted swords. He became very import in the game and became addicted. First he started showing up late to work, then he stopped going to work, then it caused problems with his marriage, finally his wife and kids left.

Here was this man who sacrificed the real to obtain something fake. All of these accomplishments were in vain. He he was left with nothing.

### **Galatians 3:5-6**

*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"?*

The spirit of God has been working in their lives for salvation and miracles and it wasn't because they had achieved "Christ follower level 30"

He didn't save them because of the Law

He didn't transform them because of the Law

He didn't perform miracles for them and through them because of the Law.  
It was the volition of the Spirit of God.

Something to take note of is that God's miracles are not formulaic. You can't say, if I do "this" then God will perform a miracle. That would put God in our debt. He's never in our debt.

## **Galatians 3:7**

*just as Abraham "believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"?*

This is a brain stretcher because this is saying that Abraham was a Christian thousands of years before Christ was born.

Abraham possessed an extraordinary faith. God told him "Pack up your family and move. I'll tell you where you are going when you get there. Abraham listened and obeyed.

God comes to Abraham when he's 90 and tells him he's going to have a son. Years later he tells Abraham to sacrifice this promised son. Abraham listened and obeyed.

What this shows and what Paul is saying is that Abraham was saved, not by works, not obedience to the Law, but his faith in God. Abraham was saved 430 years before the Law was even given. The law didn't save Abraham because there was no Law. It was faith alone.

Here's Paul's point: The solution was given before the problem was even diagnosed.

## **Galatians 3:7-9**

*Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, "In you shall all the nations be blessed." So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*

The Jews believed that they were saved because they were ethnically Jews. We are not saved because of our parents faith. Nothing in your background makes you a Christian. Nothing ethnically, socially, economically, even your attendance in church, none of that makes you a Christian. Only believers in Jesus are "children of Abraham." You cannot inherit salvation, God has no grand children! Each person must receive Christ on their own.

The Gospel that was preached to Abraham was that all nations would be blessed. The Law is a diagnostic, it is not a blessing. It exposes our condition. It shows us that we are sick. The gift to mankind was not the law but faith in Christ. I'll reiterate the point, this solution was given before the problem had even presented itself.

Look, I'm hammering the people of Galatia, but we are guilty of doing the same thing. How many of you ever feel like God loves you more when you're tracking with God and he loves you less when you are backsliding?

We start depending on our works to earn God's love and forgiveness. When you read the Bible, pay attention because there's this tendency to look at the people in the Bible as having it all together varsity level followers of God. The truth is they were screwed up.

Abraham, who's faith was counted to him as righteousness, told a king that his wife was his sister to spare his life.

He did this twice.

Dana would be so ticked off if I did this.

So can we agree that our boy Abraham had issues? It was counted to him as righteousness, a man who pimped out his wife to save his skin.

David. Noah. Isaac.

Pay attention to all the lying, murder, promiscuity, debauchery that are in the scripture and realize that God works even in that mess, and when it's your turn to walk through the mess, you will be confident that God will get you through it.

We are not saved because of our heritage, our ethnicity, our church attendance, our good deeds, we did nothing to earn it. It is Christ who saved us and it is Christ who will sustain us.

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## GALATIANS 2:15-21 ESV

**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”?

**7** Know then that it is those of faith who are the sons of Abraham. **8** And the Scripture, foreseeing that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, preached the gospel beforehand to Abraham, saying, “In you shall all the nations be blessed.” **9** So then, those who are of faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.

## Small Group Discussion Questions

### Galatians 3:1–9 (ESV)

Paul begins with, “O foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you?” Why do you think Paul uses such strong language here? What does this tell us about how serious the issue is? When have you seen sincere Christians get “bewitched” or distracted from the gospel?

Paul asks, “Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law or by hearing with faith?” Why is this question so central to his argument? How would you personally answer that question about your own life?

Verse 3 says, “Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” What does it look like to start in grace but drift into self-effort? In what subtle ways might we try to “finish” the Christian life by our own performance?

Paul reminds them of their suffering in verse 4. Why would remembering past suffering for Christ strengthen their commitment to the true gospel? How does remembering what God has already done in your life help anchor your faith?

Paul points to Abraham as the example of faith (verses 6–9). Why is Abraham such a powerful example in this argument? What does it mean that those “of faith are blessed along with Abraham”?

The phrase “hearing with faith” appears again in verse 5. What is the difference between simply hearing information and hearing with faith? How can we cultivate hearts that truly respond in faith rather than just gathering religious knowledge?