

**Are We Preaching “Another” Gospel: A 31-Day Journey toward
Rediscovering the Gospel of the Grace of God**
by C. D. Hildebrand, 24-7-365 Version 2026

Day 5

BY GRACE THROUGH FAITH NOT LAW

Galatians 2:21

I do not set aside the grace of God; for if righteousness comes through the law, then Christ died in vain.”

It isn't that we do not understand the basic tenets of Christianity, but that we have added to them. This is exactly what the teachers in Galatia were doing.

The “other” gospel about which Paul was warning the Galatians wasn't a cult like we would define it in our day. The Judaizers taught the same Jesus that you and I embrace. They believed that Jesus came in the flesh and rose bodily. They believed He was God. The Galatians were born-again believers, not converts to a cult who had never been regenerated. They believed what we all believe: that we are saved by grace through faith, not by works, and that this salvation is a *gift* from God. So, why was Paul upset with them? **Why did he pronounce a curse on anyone preaching “another” gospel if they were already saved?** Why did he say he wished their false teachers would go all the way and castrate themselves? Why was he so furious?

Our problem in discerning the answer to these questions has two core causes. First of all, as do the cults, we redefine terms. For example, we read “law” and translate it “ceremonial and civil law” automatically omitting the moral aspect of the law of Moses. By doing so, we miss the import, not only of the message of Galatians, but of all the teachings of Paul.¹

The second reason for our blindness about why Paul was so unyielding about what was taught comes from not clearly understanding that the gospel is not exclusively for the lost *before* salvation, but also for Christians afterward. The gospel is everything that pertains to the initial, continued, and ultimate salvation of *believers*. Paul knew the Galatians were believers.

¹ I write about the moral law in more detail in Days 13 and 14.

He addressed them as such. **If the gospel is only for non-believers, then why would Paul be so upset that believers had embraced “another” gospel?** The answer is clear: Paul didn’t see the good news as a message for the unsaved only; rather, he saw it as the sum of what he taught; his very ministry.

Acts 20:17-24

*From Miletus he sent to Ephesus and called for the **elders** of the church. ¹⁸ And when they had come to him, he said to them: “You know, from the first day that I came to Asia, in what manner I always lived among you, ¹⁹ serving the Lord with all humility, with many tears and trials which happened to me by the plotting of the Jews; ²⁰ **how I kept back nothing that was helpful, but proclaimed it to you, and taught you publicly and from house to house,** ²¹ testifying to Jews, and also to Greeks, **repentance toward God and faith toward our Lord Jesus Christ.** ²² And see, now I go bound in the spirit to Jerusalem, not knowing the things that will happen to me there, ²³ except that the Holy Spirit testifies in every city, saying that chains and tribulations await me. ²⁴ **But none of these things move me; nor do I count my life dear to myself, so that I may finish my race with joy, and the ministry which I received from the Lord Jesus, to testify to the gospel of the grace of God.** ²⁵ “And indeed, now I know that you all, among whom I have gone **preaching the kingdom of God,** will see my face no more.*

*²⁶ Therefore I testify to you this day that I am innocent of the blood of all men. ²⁷ For I have not shunned to declare to you **the whole counsel of God.***

The “**gospel** of the **grace** of God” is what Paul taught, and the gospel of the grace of God *is* the whole counsel of God. It was his “race” and “ministry” given to him from Jesus Christ. He taught it day and night. Grace—for years. Grace, grace, and more grace. It wasn’t a topic he addressed now and then, and after that continued to the “deeper” things of God. The gospel of the grace of God *is* the glad tidings of good things; **grace is the deeper things of God**, and he preached it to believers as well as non-believers daily, publicly, and from house to house.

In his letter to the Galatians, again and again, Paul expresses law as *opposed* to grace, and most concur; no one is saved by law, not even the moral law. Yet, the Galatians were already born again by grace through faith and not law. We get to the core of what is really disturbing Paul when we read Galatians 3:1-3.

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?

“Begun in the Spirit” refers to their initial salvation. Paul wasn’t concerned about their perception of how they were born again. He was warning them about a “gospel” that taught that, subsequent to salvation they could be made *perfect* by the flesh.

“Being made perfect” is *epiteleo*, which means “to bring something to the place where it is complete.”² Without any stretch, we can rephrase Paul’s question, “Are you so foolish, having begun in the Spirit, are you now being made complete by your own human efforts?”

This is concluding, of course, that Paul was assuming that they *needed* to be perfected. The possibility that he was actually reprimanding the Galatians for thinking that they *needed* to be perfected at all should also be considered. This question is relevant because Hebrews 10:14 proclaims that by one sacrifice, He “perfected forever” those who are sanctified. If we are “perfected” (*teleioo*) *forever*, perhaps the Galatians’ folly was thinking they *needed* to be perfected (*epiteleo*) at all. At first glance, this seems a viable interpretation. However, we can’t ignore Philippians 1:6 where Paul wrote, “being confident of this very thing, that He who has begun a good work in you will complete (*epiteleo*) it until the day of Jesus Christ”.

What are we to conclude? Are we perfected or are we not? What did Paul mean when he said that Jesus would complete the work He started in us?

As we focus on the context of Hebrews 10, we see that the author states that we have been “perfected forever” by the one sacrifice offered for our sin. This forgiveness of sin resulted in our salvation. Through that offering, Jesus perfected us forever in the sense that our sins are forever forgiven and our redemption is sure. Wuest confirms this understanding.

The word “perfected” is the translation of teleioo which means “to bring to a state of completion.” Here, the completeness of the state of salvation of the believer is in view. Everything essential to the salvation of the individual is included in the gift of salvation which the sinner receives by faith in Messiah’s sacrifice. The words “for ever” here are to be construed with “perfected.” It is a permanent state of

completeness in salvation to which reference is made. The words “them that are sanctified” are descriptive of the believer. He is one set apart for God.³

Using Hebrews 10:14 and Philippians 1:6 we can conclude that we are both perfected (*telieoo*) in regard to everything Jesus accomplished on the cross, **and** subsequently brought to a state of completion (*epiteleio*), which most certainly refers to our maturation, or one might say, to fulfilling what Jesus already accomplished. This would include aspects such as being transformed by the renewing of our mind (Rom. 12:2) and from glory to glory by beholding Jesus (2 Cor. 3:18). We aren't born again knowing every right from wrong, but grace teaches us to forsake worldly lusts and to live godly (Ti. 2:12). The fruit of the Spirit grows (Gal. 5:22). Our character develops (Rom. 5:3-4). We become rooted and grounded in God's love (Eph. 3:17). Our understanding and appreciation of what was accomplished through Jesus' life, death, and resurrection becomes clearer to us (2 Tim. 3:16-17). Our discernment between good and evil matures (Heb. 5:14).

Let me put it this way. Everything that Scripture teaches was accomplished by Christ's death is “finished.” Yet, there is a process of our current perfection being brought to completion from beginning to end. **What is essential to understand is that it is Jesus who brings to completion this work that He started—not we through our own efforts.** This growth comes by the working of the Holy Spirit in our lives.

Let's look again at Paul's question in order to understand this in closer detail. In what ways were they trying to complete themselves?

Galatians 3:2

*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**?*

Notice that Paul is coupling the Spirit with faith, and the works of the law with the flesh. Thus, I offer this interpretation:

*“Are you so foolish, having been born again by the **Spirit** of God—by grace through **faith**, are you now being brought to completion by the **flesh—the works of the law—through***

your own efforts (instead of by grace through faith)?”

Here is where we can connect with Paul’s concern, where the modern-day church can hear the Holy Spirit’s plea. For we agree wholeheartedly with our beloved brother Paul that we are born again by simply believing in Christ’s resurrection and confessing Jesus is Lord, but do we stray just as the Galatians did about the manner in which we are perfected *after* salvation? Do we sing that He who started the good work in us “will be faithful to complete it,”⁴ and then work diligently at completing it *ourselves*? Do we preach the *good* news that we are saved by grace through faith to the lost, but deliver a completely different “gospel” to the saved—one which is perceived by millions of believers today as something closer to *bad* news? **Are we giving the very clear message that after we are graciously saved apart from works, we then must begin a regimen of works in order to maintain and improve upon our relationship with God?**

These questions are very important to consider, for if we teach believers that it is by *their* discipline that they are perfected after salvation instead of by grace through faith—the Spirit, then clearly we are preaching “another” gospel; the very “gospel” upon which Paul pronounces a curse for those who teach it.

On the contrary, we are saved by grace alone through faith alone. **Our further perfection/completion is as much a miracle as our salvation.** As we walk in this grace, we grow. Notice, He does the work.

Colossians 2:6-7

As you therefore have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him,⁷ rooted and built up in Him and established in the faith, as you have been taught, abounding in it with thanksgiving.

Galatians 5:25

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

1 Thessalonians 5:23-24

Now may the God of peace Himself sanctify you completely; and may your whole spirit, soul, and body be preserved blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. ²⁴ He who calls you is faithful, who also will do it.

⁴ “He Who Began a Good Work in You” by John Mohr, © 1987 Birdwing Music