

I Pity the Fool

Text: Galatians 3:1-14

Summary

In this sermon, we examined the foolishness of turning away from the true gospel. The Galatian churches were acting foolishly by trying to continue the Christian life by the flesh after beginning by the Spirit. Paul exposes this spiritual foolishness through three arguments: the reception of the Spirit, the faith of Abraham, and the curse of the law. The call for us is to abandon the exhausting path of self-reliance and choose to live by faith in daily dependence on Christ, empowered by the Spirit.

Sermon Outline

The Marks of Foolishness

Biblical foolishness is much deeper than simply lacking common sense; it has a profound spiritual and moral dimension. A fool resists instruction (Prov 1:7), disregards consequences (Prov 14:16), repeats mistakes (Prov 26:11), and ultimately rejects God (Ps 14:1). The Galatians were exhibiting these marks by rejecting Paul's teaching, disregarding the consequences of the Judaizers message, turning away from God, and Paul didn't want them to continue repeating their mistakes.

The Reception of the Spirit (v1-5)

In the New Covenant, the indwelling of the Spirit marks every member of God's people, a future promise that was fulfilled after Christ's arrival. Paul reminds the Galatians that they received the Holy Spirit simply by hearing the gospel with faith, not by doing works of the law. It is foolish then to start the Christian life by the power of the Spirit and then try to finish it through a "do-it-yourself" reliance on the flesh. The Spirit empowers our entire lives from beginning to end.

The Faith of Abraham (v6-9)

To prove that righteousness has always been by faith, Paul points to the patriarch Abraham. Long before the Old Covenant law or circumcision existed, Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness. Therefore, the true children of Abraham – the ones who inherit God's promises – are those who have faith. We cannot treat God like a spiritual piñata, trying to beat blessings out of Him with our good works. Instead, we must simply open our hands and receive His provision by faith.

The Curse of the Law (v10-12)

For those who choose the path of moral scorekeeping, the law demands absolute perfection. Because we are sinners who inevitably disobey, relying on the law only brings a curse and separation from the people of God. We cannot work our way to the blessings of God because we can never meet the law's inflexible demands. The curse of the law is a heavy burden that leaves us enslaved, much like Pharaoh enslaved the Israelites, constantly demanding a quota we can never produce. Relying on our own works leaves us exhausted and ultimately cursed.

Wisdom for Fools (v13-14)

We do not need divine assistance to keep the law; we need total redemption. In the wise plan of God, Christ redeemed us by hanging on a tree and taking our curse upon Himself. Because of His sacrifice, Gentiles receive the blessing of Abraham and the promised Spirit. We are now called to live by faith – resting entirely on what God has done, trusting in the cross to cancel our sin, and giving all the glory to God.