



360 DISCUSSION 03.05.17

CONTINUING WITH CHRIST

GALATIANS 3:1-6



It would probably be embarrassing to ask, “What is the most foolish thing you have ever done?” Answers would probably range from thoughtless pranks, to incredibly costly mistakes.

Foolish is not a word we throw around lightly, but Paul uses it twice in the span of three verses to refer to the Galatians’ defection from Christ and the heart of the gospel. He does not pull his punches because they are about to make a monumental mistake.

They are in the process of minimizing the cross and denying the power of the Holy Spirit, by relying on circumcision and holy days to complete with what they had begun through faith in Christ and by the work of the Spirit.

The Christian life has never been about what we do for God, but what God has done for us and continues to do in us.

God does not leave us to our own devices, but promises to walk with us every step of the way.

On the night before he was crucified, Jesus promised his disciples,

“I will send you another counselor and he will be with you forever... I will not leave you as orphans: I am coming to you. ...Because I live you will live. On that day you will know that I am in my Father, you are in me, and I am in you (John 14:15-21)

Paul wants us to know that the Christian life is deeply grounded in the cross and in the Spirit.

DENYING THE POWER OF CROSS (vv. 1-2)

Paul considers the Galatians defection so serious that he wonders if someone has placed them under a spell. The word for spell is literally “evil eye.” His question in effect is, “How could you fall prey to an ‘evil eye,’” when “before” your very “eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?”

VERSES 1-2 *You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ² I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?*

1. The Galatians were obviously not present when Christ was crucified, how had “Jesus Christ,” been “publicly portrayed as crucified?”
2. How would the vivid portrayal of Christ crucified, convince them that circumcision and law keeping could not make them right with Christ?
3. Paul points to the Holy Spirit as the ultimate proof that the cross of Christ was effective. How does the reception of the Spirit underscore the effectiveness of the cross?
4. What are some of the things that the Holy Spirit does to bring us to faith in Christ and establish us in him?
5. How had the Galatian believers received the Holy Spirit?
6. Paul sets up a contrast between “works of the law” and “believing what you heard.” How would you describe the difference?
7. Why is it foolish after receiving the Holy Spirit though “believing what they heard,” to turn back to reliance on “works of the law?”

DENYING THE WORK OF THE SPIRIT (vv. 3-6)

If it was foolish be drawn away from the foundational reality of the cross and the Holy Spirit’s role in bringing us to Christ, it was every bit as foolish to deny the continuing work of the Holy Spirit as he transforms us into the image of Christ. The very Spirit who brings us to faith, is the one who sustains us in our faith.

VERSES 3-6: *Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh? ⁴ Did you experience so much for nothing— if in fact it was for nothing? ⁵ So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard— ⁶ just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness?*

1. We are confronted with another one of Paul’s famous contrasts in verse 3. He highlights the difference between the Spirit and the Flesh. The Flesh refers to fallen humanity.
 - a. What are the inherent weaknesses of the flesh?
 - b. Why do we need the Holy Spirit in order to be the people God has called us to be?
 - c. Why do we tend to rely on our own ability (the flesh) rather than the Spirit?
2. Paul once again highlights contrast between “works of the law” and “believing what you heard.” What role does “believing what you heard” play in the ongoing work of the Holy Spirit?
3. How does believing what you heard and relying on the Holy Spirit enable us to deal with the very real problems of:
 - a. Materialism
 - b. Feelings of Inadequacy
 - c. Depression
 - d. Sexual Temptation
 - e. Raising Kids
 - f. Keeping Your Work in Perspective
4. What are some are practical things you can do in the days and weeks to come to recover the centrality of the cross and our ongoing need for the Holy spirit?



360 BIBLE STUDIES 03.05.17

PAUL'S STUDY NOTES | GALATIANS 3:1-5

ESSENCE OF THE TEXT: Paul asks the Galatian believers if they are really foolish enough to deny the power of Christ and the work of the Spirit in favor of “works of the Law.”

ANALYTICAL OUTLINE

I. THE FOOLISHNESS OF DENYING THE POWER OF THE CROSS (vv. 1-2)

- A. You foolish Galatians! Who has was a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?
- B. I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

II. THE FOOLISHNESS OF DNYING THE WORK OF THE HOLY SPIRIT (vv. 3-6)

- A. Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh?
- B. Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing?
- C. So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard—just like Abraham who believed god, and it was credited to him for righteousness?

COMMENTARY

It may be helpful to review Paul's argument to this point. In chapters 1–2 he used his spiritual autobiography to prove that he was a genuine apostle of the one true gospel. Now in chapters 3–4 he explains the theology of that gospel, beginning with a rebuke. RYKEN

The argument in this paragraph is vigorous and pointed. Paul opens with an exclamation (3:1a), and then each of the succeeding units has a rhetorical question (3:1b–5), which indicates that the Galatians themselves are able to answer the questions posed. In other words, the answers are obvious and plain to anyone with an ounce of perception. Since the argument consists of rhetorical questions, linking words do not connect the verses. The paragraph closes (3:5) with an inference (“therefore,” [οὖν]) drawn from 3:1–4 (though v. 5 is also set as a rhetorical question). SCHREINER

In this paragraph the key motif is the experience of the Galatians (v. 4). Christ was “placarded” among them (v. 1); they have received the Spirit (vv. 3 and 5) and experienced the Spirit's power (v. 5). But the key point in the paragraph, which Paul will develop in the theological

argument that follows, is the means by which the Galatians have experienced these signs and blessings of the era of fulfillment: not by “works of the law” but by means of “a hearing accompanied by faith” (vv. 3, 5). The strong contrast between faith and torah that was introduced in 2:16 surfaces here with respect to the Galatians’ experience (de Boer 2011: 166). Yet Paul’s real concern is not how they began but how they are to continue: “hearing characterized by faith” is the means by which they will sustain their Christian experience (v. 3) MOO

The paragraph begins with bracing words as the Galatians are identified as “foolish,” and Paul asks if they have been bewitched by a spell, since they do not perceive the significance of Christ crucified. Paul tries to undo the bewitchment, so to speak, in 3:2–4. Paul has only one question to pose to the Galatians in the examination (3:2). And the answer is easy, for clearly they received the Spirit by faith and not by works of law. And if they have received the Spirit, they are evidently members of Abraham’s family and hence do not need to be circumcised. The case against the Judaizers is closed and shut if the Galatians have eyes to see. SCHREINER

1 You foolish Galatians! Who has cast a spell on you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?

The Galatians are upbraided for their foolishness (cf. 3:3), which is an indictment not of their intellectual capacities but of their moral inclinations. SCHREINER

Hansen rightly points out that the Galatians, like Peter (2:11–14), were on the verge of denying the gospel by their actions. SCHREINER

Paul knew, of course, that the Galatians were not really enchanted. They were under the influence of false teachers who wanted to add the law of Moses to faith in Jesus Christ to produce a “Jesus plus” gospel. But the language he uses suggests that there was some kind of demonic influence at work. One of the devil’s favorite stratagems is to distort the truth so that people can no longer tell the difference between the one true gospel and all the false alternatives. RYKEN

Doctrinal error has two primary sources: human ignorance and demonic malevolence. RYKEN

The Galatians were in danger of nullifying the grace of God. The so-called Judaizers had come from Jerusalem to persuade them that works of the law were necessary for their justification. But in that case, what was the point of the cross? Why would someone else have to die for my sins if I could take care of them myself? The logical implication of justification by works is that “Christ died for no purpose” (2:21). RYKEN

In order to “break the spell” that they were under, the Galatians needed to look to the cross. Paul follows his rebuke with a reminder: “It was before your eyes that Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified” (Gal. 3:1). The fact that Paul specifically mentions the eyes is intriguing, because the ancients generally thought that enchantment came through “the evil eye.” Now that they were bewitched, the Galatians needed to fix their eyes back on the cross of Christ. RYKEN

It is often said that a picture is worth a thousand words. But if there is time for a thousand words, people can see the picture for themselves, which is what happened when Paul presented the gospel. RYKEN

The apostles preached that this Christ had been crucified. To preach is to portray the cross. Paul always preached what he called “the word of the cross” (1 Cor. 1:18). He said, “We preach Christ crucified” (1 Cor. 1:23). Or again, he resolved “to know nothing among you except Jesus Christ and him crucified” (1 Cor. 2:2). Paul’s gospel was the gospel of the crucified Christ. It centered on the death of God’s own Son on the cross, and on the implications of that death for the salvation of the world. RYKEN

It is significant that in Galatians Paul speaks of the crucifixion in the perfect tense. He used the perfect form of the verb “crucify” back in chapter 2 when he said, “I have been crucified with Christ” (2:19). He uses it again at the beginning of chapter 3. Literally, Jesus Christ was portrayed not “as crucified,” but “as having been crucified” (Gal. 3:1). RYKEN

The perfect tense denotes a past event that continues to have significance in the present. And if ever there was an event that called for the perfect tense, it was the crucifixion of Jesus Christ. RYKEN

What the Galatians needed, then, was a reminder that on the cross Jesus did everything necessary for their salvation. Jesus is, in the words of John Brown, “the only and all-sufficient Saviour.” His cross is the only and all-sufficient atonement for sin. Thus our faith in him is the only and all-sufficient way to be justified before God. And since Jesus is the only and all-sufficient Savior, it would be totally senseless to try to add anything to what he did on the cross. In particular, it would be utter and complete folly to try to get God to accept us by keeping his law. The only way to be justified is by faith alone. RYKEN

This appeal came in a series of rapid rhetorical questions—four of them in all:

1. A question about initiation, in which Paul took the Galatians back to the moment of their conversion: “Did you receive the Spirit by works of the law, or by hearing with faith?” (Gal. 3:2).
2. A question about completion, or how the Christian makes it to the end of the Christian life: “Having begun by the Spirit, are you now being perfected by the flesh?” (Gal. 3:3).
3. A question about persecution, the cost of following a crucified Christ: “Did you suffer so many things in vain—if indeed it was in vain?” (Gal. 3:4).
4. A question about miracles and their meaning for the Christian life: “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?” (Gal. 3:5). RYKEN

² I only want to learn this from you: Did you receive the Spirit by the works of the law or by believing what you heard?

Since the Galatians suffered from bewitchment, Paul asks a series of rhetorical questions. Essentially, all these questions boiled down to a single issue: Does the Christian obtain the Holy Spirit by working the law or by hearing with faith? This question was meant to be rhetorical, for the Galatians could not possibly deny their experience of the Holy Spirit. If they were Christians at all—as Paul assumed they were—they had received the Holy Spirit when they came to Christ. RYKEN

He prefaces the question with an introduction that signals its importance: “this only do I want to learn from you.” By asking about how they “received the Spirit,” Paul assumes something that is central to his theology: when a person comes to Christ and is justified, that person receives the Spirit of God (cf. esp. Rom. 8:9–10). The bestowal of the Spirit is a mark of the new age of salvation, predicted in the prophets (see esp. Joel 2:28–32, quoted in Acts 2:17–21; cf. Rom. 10:13; see esp. Fee 1994: 383–84). The Galatians know full well that they have, indeed, received the Spirit, not only because of the inner witness of that Spirit to their new spiritual identity (Gal. 4:6; Rom. 8:14–17) but also because of the miracles produced by the Spirit in their midst (v. 5; cf. Dunn 1993a: 153). MOO

The word “received” (ἐλάβετε) hearkens back to the time when the Galatians first heard the gospel and became believers. The presence of the Spirit was dramatically and powerfully evident in their lives. SCHREINER

The reference to the Spirit confirms that the conversion of the Galatians is in view, for the Spirit is the sign that one belongs to the people of God (cf. 1 Cor 2:12). At conversion the Holy Spirit is poured out in one's heart (Rom 5:5). Those who belong to Christ and are genuinely Christians have the Spirit dwelling in them (Rom 8:9; cf. 8:14–15). Conversely, the natural person does not have the Spirit (1 Cor 2:14). The Spirit authenticates one's salvation and functions as the guarantee that God will complete his saving work (2 Cor 1:22; 5:5; Eph 1:14). SCHREINER

In a similar way, Peter defended the inclusion of Gentiles into the church of Jesus Christ apart from circumcision by appealing to the gift of the Spirit (Acts 15:8; cf. 10:44–48). Since Gentiles had the Spirit, circumcision was not required. Paul's argument here is strikingly the same. Since the Galatians have the Spirit, they are clearly Christians and belong to the people of God; hence, circumcision and observing the law are not required to belong to his people. SCHREINER

The Galatians knew something about the work of the Holy Spirit, the third person of the Trinity, for they had come under his regenerating influence. They had received his gifts, such as teaching and prophecy. They were starting to display his fruit—love, joy, peace, and all the rest (Gal. 5:22–23). The Holy Spirit even worked miracles among them, as he often does when the gospel first penetrates a culture. The apostles cast out demons and healed the sick. Perhaps the Galatians themselves had performed mighty works of divine power, at least for a time. Having had all these memorable experiences, the Galatians could never forget what the Holy Spirit had done in their churches. They had irrefutable evidence of his work and presence. RYKEN

How was the Spirit received? It was not because the Galatians did anything required by the law. In fact, they did not keep the law and its requirements, for they were uncircumcised. They received the Spirit when they heard the gospel preached and placed their faith in the gospel. Believing—not doing—was the pathway to receiving the Spirit. SCHREINER

There were and are only two possibilities: the Spirit comes either by “works of the law” or by “hearing with faith.” As we saw back in chapter 5, the phrase “works of the law” refers to law-keeping in general, and not simply to the Old Testament ceremonial law. So here two principles are set in opposition: law and faith. If the Spirit comes by working the law, then there is something I must do to get the Spirit. If I keep Torah and follow the regulations of the Old Testament law, then God will give me his Spirit. Thus the blessing of the Holy Spirit is God's reward for my spiritual achievements. RYKEN

3 Are you so foolish? After beginning by the Spirit, are you now finishing by the flesh?

One of the most important verses for the Christian life is verse 3. Many believers are taught that justification is by faith alone while sanctification is by faith and works, as if sanctification were a cooperative effort involving both ourselves and the Lord. Such a perspective may be misleading. Believers do not begin the Christian life by faith and through the Spirit and then continue it by works and through the flesh. Sanctification is lived out in the same way as justification (though it does not follow from this that justification and sanctification are the same thing, as too many claim today!). It is by faith alone and through the Spirit alone. SCHREINER

However, there is never any need to refinish the finished work of Christ. In fact, trying to do so would ruin his priceless work altogether. It would be something like retracing Babe Ruth's signature on a baseball. Rather than adding to its value, doing so would completely destroy it. RYKEN

We could say the same thing about sexual sin. Sexual pleasures are intense, but the Lord teaches us that sexual pleasure is to be restricted to marriage and that sexual sin is destructive (cf. Prov. 5:1–23; 1 Thess. 4:3–8). So, what does it mean to live by faith and the Holy Spirit in this area? We are not called upon to try as hard as we can to avoid sexual sin. Instead, we are called upon to

trust God. He loves us, and if we trust him, we will believe that violating his command in this area will damage us and ruin us. Our obedience in this area, in other words, flows from our faith. The great hymn says “trust and obey,” but it would be better to rephrase it, for those who trust will obey, and those who disobey show that they don’t trust God’s goodness or power.

SCHREINER

Such a view does not lead to the conclusion that good works are unnecessary, but all good works are the fruit of faith and evidence of the powerful work of the Spirit. Believers please God when they trust him for everything that comes their way, knowing that he has been faithful to forgive their sins and that he will provide everything they need. Paul argues here that progress in the Christian life does not differ from how we began the Christian life. In both instances the believer trusts God and does not rely on the flesh or on any native ability to produce good works. SCHREINER

Paul’s warning about “works of the law,” then, is not based only on the fact that these works belong to an outmoded era or that they reflect Jewish ethnocentrism (though both may be involved). Rather, Paul’s switch to “flesh” in this verse implies that his warning is ultimately about the broadly human issue of “doing.” Of course, Paul is not denying the importance of “doing” in the outworking of the salvation bestowed initially by the Spirit. Faith certainly “works” (5:6), and a true work of God’s Spirit will always issue in works of obedience (5:22–24). But the agitators were apparently insisting that becoming a “son” of Abraham and attaining ultimate righteousness with God were based on faith + torah observance. It is this synergism with respect to righteousness that Paul denies. MOO

We must carefully sort out Paul’s view in this matter and distinguish it from the view of the Judaizers. The false teachers were not giving advice about progress in the Christian life, for their view, as in Judaism, was that circumcision was required for entrance into the people of God. Therefore, the Judaizers argued that those uncircumcised were not part of the covenant enacted by the Lord (Gen 17:9–14; Lev 12:3). The Judaizers argued that the Galatians must be circumcised to belong to the people of God.

SCHREINER

Paul, however, believed that the Galatians were Christians because they had already received the Spirit. Hence, he frames the matter in terms of progress in the Christian life. In other words, Paul writes from his perspective; he was not even willing to grant the premise of the false teachers. He assumes that the Galatians are Christians, and thus he describes their desire to be circumcised as a misguided attempt to make progress in the Christian life on the basis of the flesh instead of the Spirit.

SCHREINER

The concern that Paul expresses in this verse reaches to the rhetorical heart of Galatians. The Galatian Christians have started well; they have received the Spirit and have been justified by their faith in Christ, a gift of God’s grace. But the agitators have come on the scene, arguing that people can go free in the judgment only if they add to their faith the “works of the law.” Paul seeks to persuade the Galatians not to buy into this scheme: as they began, with the Spirit and with faith, so they must continue (see 5:5). MOO

We see here as well that the Christian life follows the same course whether the issue is justification or sanctification. It is not as if justification is through the Spirit and by faith, and sanctification is by works and human effort. Both justification and sanctification are due to the Spirit’s work and are the result of faith. SCHREINER

There is no such thing as performance-based Christianity. Having begun by faith, we must continue by faith. Justification is a doctrine for the whole Christian life from start to finish. It is not simply a doctrine for coming to Christ in the first place, although we are justified the moment we trust in Christ. Nor is it merely a great doctrine to die with, although God will justify us through faith in Christ at the final judgment.

1. Justification is a doctrine to live by each and every moment. It is a doctrine for the damned. There comes a day when every man, woman, and child must admit to being a hardened sinner, rotten to the very core, and deserving of God's just wrath. When that day comes, the only hope is to come to Christ by faith alone.
2. Justification is also a doctrine for the doubtful. There are days in the life of every Christian when the whole thing seems rather implausible. Is it true that God loves me and has a wonderful plan for my life? Does he really care about me? When the doubts come, the believer goes back to the cross where Christ died to justify sinners and holds on to it by faith alone.
3. Justification is a doctrine for the discouraged, too. At times, things seem rather gloomy and hopeless. In fact, sometimes they seem altogether impossible, so that we wonder how we can make it through another day. But this is exactly why we need to preach the gospel to ourselves every day. As we get out of bed we say, "I know what my real problem is: I am a sinner living in a sinful world." Then as we step into the shower we say, "Although I am a great sinner, I have an even greater Savior, who loved me and gave himself for me." By breakfast time we are able to make it through the day, trusting in God's grace alone.

The good news of the gospel is that even though we are lost and needy sinners, if we know Christ, then we are and always will be justified. Justification is much more than a great doctrine to die with, although it certainly is that. Justification by grace alone, through faith alone, in Christ alone is also a wonderful doctrine to live by. RYKEN

PHILIPPIANS 1:6 I am sure of this, that he who started a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

4 Did you experience so much for nothing—if in fact it was for nothing?

The Greek word is also a word for "experience." Thus it might simply refer to all the spiritual experiences the Galatians had been through. The Holy Spirit had done a gracious, even a miraculous work among them, but now Paul wondered whether it had all been in vain. He sincerely hoped not. In fact, his words at the end of verse 4—"if indeed it was in vain"—seem almost hopeful. Perhaps all is not yet lost. RYKEN

To put this another way, we cannot base our justification on our sanctification. RYKEN

From start to finish, the whole Christian life is by grace through faith. A new life in Christ commences with faith, continues by faith, and will be completed through faith. To put this another way, the gospel is for Christians just as much as it is for non-Christians. We never advance beyond the good news of the cross and the empty tomb. There is nothing else to add to faith as the ground of our salvation because faith unites us to Jesus Christ. Works have no part in establishing the basis for our salvation, but are added to faith in much the same way that a building rests upon and rises from its foundation. Therefore, the Christian always looks back to the gospel and never to the law as the basis for his righteousness before God. RYKEN

The word τῶσαῦτα, a neuter-plural form of τὸσοῦτος (tosoutos), can have a quantitative sense ("so many things") or a qualitative sense ("such great things"; BDAG 1012) MOO

Have you suffered so many things in vain—if indeed they are in vain? (τῶσαῦτα ἐπάθετε εἰκῆ; εἴ γε καὶ εἰκῆ). Another rhetorical question is fired from Paul's arsenal of arguments against the Galatians. Now he asks them as believers whether they have suffered so many things for nothing. The verb used here (πάσχω) could mean "experienced," as many commentators take it, rather than "suffered." Words derive their meaning from context, and thus the reading "experienced" might be correct, and in this case Paul would be referring especially to the powerful work of the Spirit in their midst. SCHREINER

However, this word (πάσχω) elsewhere in the NT means “suffered.” Such a reading seems more likely since this is the usual NT meaning of the word. The reading “experienced” is often defended with the claim that the letter says nothing about the Galatians suffering, but 4:29 suggests that they did experience persecution. Further, suffering was a staple of Christian existence, and hence it seems probable that the Galatians were not spared from discrimination and verbal abuse for their newfound faith. What Paul asks here is whether that suffering was in vain, for if they renounced the gospel of Christ and received circumcision, their suffering as Christians had no purpose. Indeed, elsewhere in Paul those who receive the Spirit suffer; hence, there is a closer connection between suffering and the Spirit than is often acknowledged. SCHREINER

Paul uses the language of vanity (εἰκῆ, cf. 1 Cor 15:2; Gal 4:11) in soteriological contexts, he teaches that faith is futile if one does not persevere to the end. Failure to continue in the faith will lead to eschatological judgment.. SCHREINER

Paul does not claim that the Galatians’ sufferings were in vain. He leaves them with a condition. If they follow the Judaizers and renounce the gospel, their suffering as new Christians was for nothing. Paul hopes that his warning here will provoke them to reconsider and repent, so that they will obtain the full reward. SCHREINER

⁵ So then, does God give you the Spirit and work miracles among you by your doing the works of the law? Or is it by believing what you heard— ⁶ just like Abraham who believed God, and it was credited to him for righteousness?

This text also teaches us that the new age has come because God has given us the eschatological Spirit promised in the OT. The Galatians are the people of the new covenant precisely because the Spirit had been poured out in their midst. Furthermore, the Spirit manifested himself in evident ways by doing miracles in their midst. The mark of the Christian community today continues to be the presence of the Spirit in power. Only those who have received the Spirit (Rom 8:9) truly belong to Christ. SCHREINER

First-century Judaism generally focused on Abraham’s obedience, and especially the obedience he so memorably revealed when God “tested” him by calling on him to sacrifice his son Isaac (Gen. 22). On the basis of Gen. 26:5, Jewish interpreters also viewed Abraham’s obedience as directed to the law itself (see the additional note on 3:6). The agitators were probably using this view of Abraham to argue that righteousness was tied to doing the law. The appeal to Gen. 15:6 may, then, be a reflection of Paul’s own reading of the Abraham narrative (Martyn 1997: 297. MOO

Genesis 15:6 recounts Abraham’s response to the Lord’s promise that Abraham’s “seed,” coming from his own body, would be as numerous as the stars in the heaven (15:4): “Abram believed the Lord.” In turn, the Lord responded to Abraham and “credited it to him as righteousness.” The meaning of this passage is disputed, but it is best taken to mean that God graciously viewed Abraham’s faith as having in itself fulfilled all that God expected of Abraham in order for him to be in the right before God. Paul’s appeal to this verse for the connection between forensic righteousness and faith is, therefore, a fair application of the intention of Gen. 15:6 (see the additional note on 3:6). MOO

Paul might have in mind with the previous paragraph is not clear. His implicit comparison between the Galatians’ experience of the Spirit and Abraham’s righteousness reveals that Paul views justification and the Spirit as closely related that “righteousness” includes the transforming work of God’s Spirit: the Spirit functions in verses 1–5 not as an agent of transformation but as the confirmation that the believers have indeed entered into relationship with God. MOO

His concern is to make clear to the Galatians that, in contrast to the views of the agitators, righteousness is always and at every stage manifested through faith. MOO

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