

Notes for the Ones Called-Out to Meet

Info: (651) 283-0568 Discipleship Training Ministries, Inc. www.dtminc.org Today's Date: May 29, 2022

Inside-Out: Completing the Inworking Initiative

by Dan Trygg

“You foolish Galatians, who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified? ² This is the only thing I want to find out from you: did you receive the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? ³ Are you so foolish (unperceptive)? Having begun-within by the Spirit, are you now being completed by the flesh? ⁴ Did you suffer so many things in vain-- if indeed it was in vain? ⁵ So then, does the One providing to y'all the Spirit and inworking miracles (powerful-acts, abilities) among you, do it by the works of the Law, or by hearing with faith?”

Galatians 3:1-5

“Being confident of this very thing, that the One beginning-within in y'all a good work will complete it until the day of Christ Jesus.”

Philippians 1:6

“Therefore, as you have received Christ Jesus the Lord, so walk in Him...”

Colossians 2:6-7

“Now the God of peace, who brought up from the dead the great Shepherd of the sheep through the blood of the eternal covenant, even Jesus our Lord, ²¹ equip you in every good thing to do His will, doing in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight, through Jesus Christ, to whom be the glory forever and ever. Amen.”

Hebrews 13:20,21

We have been working through a study I have called “Inside-Out”, focusing on the reality of what God has done inside of us in Christ. We have looked at how God has made us new. There is a new life, ... a new person..., that God has brought to birth within us, by the Holy Spirit. Even though we still carry about the old person, ... the old, sinful, Adamic nature..., we have a new identity and capacity. **We can live out from the new, inner life from the Holy Spirit. He works within us, and we are to learn to express or “work-out” what He is initiating inside of us.**

Today's study follows along this same idea. God initiates something in us, and we are to act in accordance with what He is doing. The emphasis is on what God is “beginning-within” us, ... and the advancement or fulfillment of that in our lives.

The first passage is from Galatians 3. Paul is dealing with churches that he and Barnabas had started on their first missionary journey, in the area that would be modern-day Turkey (Acts 13:13-14:26). After they had left, some false teachers came among the new converts, telling them that it was not enough to believe in Christ. They insisted that they needed to get circumcised and keep the commands and traditions of Judaism. **Throughout the letter, Paul contrasts trying to live by their own fleshly ability, or by learning to live by the inner life of the Spirit. These two ways of living are incompatible (5:17).** They are from two very different sources. **The key is the initiative. Where is the origination of the actions of the life of the believer? Is it coming from the Spirit, or from the self-initiative of the flesh?** Are they living by attempting to keep the Law, ... living by their own understanding, and according to an external code..., or are they waiting for and depending on the inner leading of the Spirit (5:5)? **If they were attempting to live by the Law, ... to try to become righteous by their behavior, ..., Paul said that Christ would be of no benefit to them. They had unwittingly estranged themselves from Christ.** They had fallen out from grace (5:4). This is a serious problem! **Paul wasn't talking about them losing their salvation, but he was trying to show them the complete incompatibility of living by the Spirit, versus trying to live by the Law, or by self-effort.**

With this background explanation, we can begin to appreciate Paul's exclamation, “Oh foolish Galatians! Who has bewitched you, before whose eyes Jesus Christ was publicly portrayed as crucified?” What does he mean? **When he had been among them, he told them how Jesus had been crucified on their behalf and in their place, so that as they trusted in Christ's work for them, they would be counted as righteous by God.** The message was that a person is not justified by works of the Law, or by trying to be good. **No one will ever be righteous in God's sight by their own efforts. A person is justified by faith in Christ, and what He has done for us.** “Oh foolish Galatians! Unperceptive people! ... did you receive the Spirit by works of the Law, or by hearing with faith? Are you so unperceptive? Having begun-within by the Spirit, are you now being matured by the flesh?” **The inner-life of the Spirit that came to you by trusting in Christ, is not completed by self-effort.** Note the contrasting ideas. The initiation of your life in Christ came as you trusted in Him. **The beginning experience of the Spirit at work in your life was not a result of works. It came as you trusted in Jesus.** The completion or maturation of your walk with the Spirit will come the same way, ... not by works of the Law, but simply by trusting in the truth you have heard.

The issue is not about outward behavior, it is about the inner nature. Notice what Paul said in verse 3: “Did you receive the Spirit...? Are you so unperceptive? **Having-inwardly-begun by the Spirit, are you being completed/matured by the flesh?** The Greek for “having-inwardly-begun” emphasizes the reality of an inner change. The Spirit began something in you that cannot be matured or completed by natural efforts or resources. **It is a supernatural life.** It can only grow and develop as it is nurtured, supported and built up by the empowerment of the Spirit.

In Philippians 1:6, Paul used the same terms as in Galatians 3:3. He said that he was confident that the One who inwardly-began a good work in them would complete/fulfill/mature it until the day of Christ's return. God does not start things He does not intend to finish. **The reason for Paul's confidence was the recognition that God had initiated something inside of them. The language here, and in Galatians 3, is emphatic.** The focus is "begin-within". Here, this word is reinforced by the next word "in". **He "began-within in y'all" a good work. God started something inside of them that He would continue to work on and develop, until it is completed when Christ returns.** 1 John 3:2 says, "Beloved, *now* we are children of God, and it has not yet appeared what we will be. We know that when He appears, we will be like unto Him." *That* is when the fulfillment of what God has initiated in us will be complete. No matter how much we *do*, ...or *don't*..., *experience* of what God has for us in this life, ...what He would like to bring to fruition in us, and accomplish through us..., **one thing is certain: God will complete the salvation process that He has begun in us.** The reason for this is very evident: **He has put something in us, ...He began something inside of us. It is His creative work.** As we have looked at the other word pictures in this series, we can see why this is. He has birthed us by His Spirit. We are born from above, ...not from seed which is perishable, but imperishable (1 Pet. 1:23). We are children of God, new creatures. God has transformed our spiritual DNA from being a bad tree into being a good tree. We *will* grow to become all that our inner design and make-up determines, ...and we *will be* like Him. We are new persons, ...made new in our inner being. **Our outward behavior does not change than new inner nature. When Christ returns, all that is of the old nature will fall away, and what will remain is that new creation, that new person, made in the likeness of God.**

Salvation is offered to us as a *gift*. It is received by faith, ...*not* earned by works. Once it is received and *activated* by the Holy Spirit's regenerating power, the new life *has begun-within in us*. *That reality cannot be lost*. Just as we cannot *earn* our salvation by works of self-effort, we cannot *lose* our salvation by sinful choices, either. **That new person that was initiated within us is not capable of sin.** It is a good tree, by its nature, ...and it will produce good fruit. It cannot bear bad fruit. **Now, in our present experience, we still see sin's power at work within us, but that is not who we are anymore!** We are that new, born-from-above person, brought into existence by the Spirit of God as we received God's grace by faith. Therefore, Paul could be confident that if God had initiated a new birth within them, they would eventually become like Jesus, when He returns. **We are not to focus on the old nature, or the old behaviors.** That will not be productive. **We are to focus on the life of God that is active within us, the life of the Spirit.**

This is why Paul came down so hard on the Galatians. He said it *twice*, "*Unperceptive Galatians!*" and, "...are you so *unperceptive?*" **What were they unperceptive about? Life from God did not come to them by good works, ...by religious practices, ...by heroic efforts. Life from God came as they heard the good news of God's love in Jesus Christ, and they received it by faith.** Hearing, ...and believing. Becoming aware, ... and trusting. They didn't have to *do* anything! They didn't have to join a club, pay dues, go through some elaborate initiation. They did not have to fulfill a quest, or a list of required accomplishments. They didn't have to offer sacrifices, or attend classes, or religious meetings. They didn't have to fast, or cut their bodies, or flagellate themselves. They weren't required to sell all their property or move to some new location. What was required was to realize that they were sinners, lost and under God's wrath, ...but God had provided salvation through the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. Those who believed this good news, and chose to take Jesus as their King, were empowered to receive new life and be born of the Spirit (Jn. 1:12,13). **The initiative did not come from them; it was from God. They just responded to what God initiated.**

In Colossians 2:6, Paul instructs us to walk in Jesus the same way we received Him. In the passage, he had talked about how "Christ in us" is the mystery that had been hidden throughout history, but has now been revealed. Christ in us is the hope of the glory or radiance of God (1:26-29). Again, **the apostle draws our attention to what is inside of us, the life and Spirit of Christ. We are to live in response to that inner working.** That is how we are to become complete or mature in Him. It is that indwelling power that motivated and empowered Paul in his own ministry. We are to expect and respond to that inworking of Christ that is in us, just as we did when we trusted in Him for salvation, ...by faith. **Faith means that we act on what He is prompting us to do.**

In Hebrews 13, the writer tells us that we can expect God to "equip us in every good thing to do His will", and that He will be "doing in us that which is well-pleasing in His sight." These are two different things. First, *He will give us what we need to do what He desires*, ...and then *He will actively be doing something in us to accomplish what He desires*. This is very similar to Philippians 2:12,13, where we are told to "work-out" what God is "working-in us". Here, God will "fit us out" (equip us for the job), and He will be doing, causing, working, actively-producing in us the thing that is well-pleasing to Him. Now, **we must respond in faith to bring that inner activity into outward expression.** Here is another passage that is telling us to expect God to initiate something inside of us that He intends for us to engage with. This inner stirring is a reminder that we are, indeed, indwelt by the Spirit of God, made new and energized by Him. **Faith makes this inner stirring to become tangible, visible evidence of God at work in our lives.**