



## The Gospel Project – Sermon Outline

**Title:** The Spirit's Work: From Start to Finish

**Text:** Galatians 3:1-3, 5:5

**Connection to Unit Theme:** Believers rely on the Spirit's work - past, present, and future.

### Introduction Idea

The painting of George Washington we find on our American one-dollar bill, known as The Athenaeum, is the work of Gilbert Stuart. This well-respected painter created portraits of many kings and presidents. However, Stuart never completed his famous portrait of Washington. Stuart reasoned that if he held on to the painting he could easily make copies that would sell for a steep price. Legend has it that Martha Washington demanded Stuart give her the portrait once he was finished. So, he never finished.

Some may wonder if the ministry of the Spirit is similar. Does He begin the work of transformation in the believer, but leave it unfinished? Through his letter, the apostle Paul helped the church in Galatia, and us, see that the Spirit not only begins God's work in our lives but also carries it to completion.

### Sermon Division I – The Spirit begins God's work (3:1-3)

Paul's opponents, whom he called "Judaizers," believed that in order for Gentiles to participate in God's family they would have to be circumcised. Paul argues throughout that it was not by "works of the law", such as circumcision, that the Galatians had received God's Spirit. Receiving God's Spirit was the hallmark of being a child of God. Therefore, Paul argued that it was through faith and not works that one became a member of God's family.

In verse 3 Paul reminds the Galatians it was the Spirit who had begun the work. Paul compares the work of the Spirit to the work of the flesh. The latter is "referring to reliance on the old Adam, the unregenerate person. " It will not be through the works of man that dead men are brought to life. It is only through the work of the Spirit that new life begins. Only when we are "born of the Spirit" are we truly born again.

**Application:** Has the Spirit begun God's work in you? If so, what does this mean for those that have not come to Christ in faith? How does this motivate us to pray for the Spirit's work on behalf of the lost people around us? How does this truth cause us to relate to those that are not yet believers? What does this do to our pride?



## **Sermon Division II – The Spirit finishes God's work (5:5)**

Paul reminded the Galatians that not only did the Spirit begin the work, but it would be through Him that His work would finish. We finish the same way we begin, by grace through faith, both of which come by the Spirit's work in the life of the believer.

In Galatians 5:5 Paul says that it is "through the Holy Spirit" that we "eagerly wait for the hope of righteousness." This hope of righteousness is the ultimate hope of believers, our final declaration of righteousness. "In the interim believers wait for that end-time declaration in reliance on the Holy Spirit and place their trust in Christ."

The rest of the Scriptures color in for us what this "waiting" looks like. We see that the Spirit gifts believers for service and empowers them to carry out kingdom work. We also see that He causes spiritual fruit to grow in our lives. The Spirit will continue working in us and on our behalf as we eagerly wait for the day of complete redemption. We are called to cooperate with the Spirit as He does His work within us.

**Application:** Are you bearing the fruit of the Spirit as you eagerly await the return of Christ? Are you exercising the gifts God has given to you through His Spirit? The Spirit assures us He will complete His work. Therefore, let us confidently cooperate with Him.

## **Conclusion Idea**

Ephesians 2:10 says that as God's new creations "we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." God does not leave any painting unfinished. He completes His work from start to finish. Therefore, let us boldly venture out in obedience knowing that God is at work within us to will and to act according to His good pleasure.

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